

**PBUC  
UMPIRE  
MANUAL**



# PBUC UMPIRE MANUAL



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## **FOREWORD**

The integrity of baseball is embodied in the Umpire upon whom the trust is placed to insure the game is played by the rules guaranteeing fairness for those involved. During the course of performing these prescribed duties, the Umpire must at times interpret and clarify rules as they are written. Words can never be written to cover all situations in our great game and therefore incidents may occur which call for the sound and fair judgment of the Umpire. This publication contains interpretations, clarifications, general practices and rulings endorsed by Minor League Baseball and the Professional Baseball Umpire Corporation. It is provided as a supplement to the Official Baseball Rules which govern all games in Minor League Baseball.

PAT O'CONNER, PRESIDENT  
Minor League Baseball



# **SECTION 1**

## **CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF UMPIRES**

### **1.1 UMPIRE ATTITUDE**

The following principles in Section 1.1 and 1.2 have been applied with success for many years and are considered sound. Incorporate them into your umpiring:

1. Keep the game moving. A game is often helped by energetic and earnest work of the umpires.
2. Be focused on every pitch of every game without regard to factors such as the score, inning, weather or standing of the teams involved.
3. Display hustle, concentration and an alert, confident demeanor in order to project a professional appearance on the field.
4. Remain active on the field at all times.
5. Be courteous, impartial and firm to compel respect from all.
6. Remember that you are an official representative of professional baseball both on and off the field. Act accordingly.
7. Always keep your uniform in good condition.
8. Always dress appropriately to and from the ballpark and in public places.
9. Even when off the field, remember that you continue to be representatives of professional baseball and your league. Never do anything that would bring disgrace upon you or professional baseball. Always act, dress and work in a way befitting your profession.

### **1.2 HANDLING SITUATIONS**

Handling situations on the field is a challenging aspect of professional umpiring. Umpires must keep the game under control and not exacerbate a situation. To this end, PBUC recognizes that every situation is unique and that umpire discretion is an essential element of the job. However, PBUC strives for staff uniformity in dealing with situations on the field. Umpires shall exercise independent judgment consistent with the following guidelines:

1. Cooperate with your partners. Help each other. Don't hesitate to ask for assistance if you are blocked out on a play. The main objective is to have all decisions ultimately correct.
2. Keep all personalities out of your work. You must be able to forgive and forget. Every game is a new game.
3. Remain calm, confident and non-confrontational in order to maintain an ap-

pearance of fairness and impartiality.

4. Do not initiate an argument; **avoid profanity** and **sarcastic comments**; do not insist on the “last word” or follow a player or manager who is walking away. If he's walking away - let him go!

5. Work hard at learning what comments you need to respond to and what you should ignore on the field. When it is necessary to respond, do it in a manner that does not intensify the situation.

6. Do not ignore occurrences on the field that, in your judgment, require your attention to maintain control and order.

7. Be a steadying influence on the game. You must be able to sort out complex and important situations and should not hesitate to make unpopular decisions.

8. If difficult situations arise, it is essential that umpires stay “above the fray” and not adopt the emotional level of a particular player or manager. Every judgment should be made with common sense and knowledge of the Official Baseball Rules.

9. Never charge a player or follow him if he is moving away; do not point your finger or use violent gestures during an argument.

10. Do not initiate physical contact with players, coaches or managers.

11. **Keep your temper.** A decision or an action made in anger is never sound.

12. Vary your level of intensity based on the situation. Avoid escalating the argument.

13. **Watch your language!** Never use language toward a player, coach or manager, which, if directed at the umpire, would result in the player, coach or manager being disciplined.

14. If the manager has a legitimate point to argue under the rules, it is the umpire's duty to listen to him if his comments and demeanor are reasonable. An umpire can do this with dignity and no loss of respect. Be understanding - remember, the players are in a heated contest. You are impartial judges and should **maintain a calm dignity** becoming of your authority. **Be a good listener.**

15. Be careful where you stand between innings when trouble can be expected from one side (i.e., certainly do not stand on the base line in front of a dugout when trouble can be expected from that dugout).

16. Keep control of the game and attempt to defuse any potential confrontation between players, coaches or managers of the opposing teams. However, if a bench-clearing fight develops, umpires should stay clear and let coaches, managers and other players break up the fight. Umpires should attempt to identify instigators and combatants and, after consultation with their crew, take whatever action they deem necessary, if any, within the guidelines of the On-Field Behavior Policy.

### 1.3 STANDARDS FOR REMOVAL FROM THE GAME

Umpires are entrusted with the authority to remove any participant from the game. **This responsibility should never be taken lightly.** PBUC recognizes that every situation is unique and that umpire discretion is essential to proper rule enforcement. While there are unique and extraordinary circumstances, players and clubs look for uniformity

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in applying consistent standards for ejection.

The following general principles should be considered when deciding whether to eject a player, coach, manager or other person from the game:

1. Use of profanity specifically directed at an umpire or vulgar personal insults of an umpire are grounds for ejection.
2. Physical contact with an umpire is ground for ejection.
3. Refusal to stop arguing, and further delaying the game after the umpire has provided a player or manager adequate opportunity to make a point, is ground for ejection. The umpire should warn the player or manager that he has been heard and that he should return to his position or be ejected. Be firm and strong when warning the person, and **AVOID WARNING TOO SOON**.
4. If a player, coach or manager **leaves his position** to argue balls and strikes (*including half swings*), he should be warned to immediately return or he will be automatically ejected.
5. During an argument if a manager, coach or player makes reference to having observed a video replay that purportedly contradicts the call under dispute, such person should be **warned** immediately to stop or he will be subject to ejection from the game.
6. Use of histrionic gestures (i.e., jumping up and down, violently waving arms or demonstrations) while arguing with an umpire, or stepping out of the dugout and making gestures toward an umpire, are grounds for ejection. Throwing anything out of a dugout (towels, cups, equipment, etc.) is ground for automatic ejection.
7. Actions by team personnel specifically intended to ridicule an umpire are grounds for ejection (i.e., drawing a line in the dirt to demonstrate location of a pitch).
8. Throwing equipment in disgust over an umpire's call may be grounds for ejection. If the umpire deems the action severe, the umpire may eject the offender. If league regulations permit, the umpire may instead warn the offender by issuing an equipment violation. If issued, the offender is to be notified immediately.
9. Any player, manager or coach who fails to comply with an order from an umpire to do or refrain from doing anything that affects administering the rules and regulations governing play is subject to ejection in accordance with Official Baseball Rule 9.01. Examples of this include failure to stay within the lines of the batter's box after warning from the umpire, refusal to submit a piece of equipment for the umpire's inspection, etc.
10. Team personnel may not come onto the playing surface to argue or dispute a warning issued under Official Baseball Rule 8.02(d). If a manager, coach or player leaves the dugout or his position to dispute a warning, he should be warned to stop. If he continues, he is subject to ejection.

While standards listed here may justify an ejection, Official Baseball Rule 9.01(d) grants umpire discretion to eject any participant "for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct or language." In addition, there are situations listed in the Official Baseball Rules and in other sections of this manual that result in immediate ejection. These situations include violations such as pitcher possessing a foreign substance, batter charging the pitcher with the intention of fighting the pitcher, pitcher intentionally throwing at a batter, etc.

### 1.4 LEAGUE REGULATIONS

Each Minor League Baseball league has a number of regulations/guidelines that are specific to that league. All umpires must be thoroughly familiar with these regulations, as these rules do vary from league to league. Do not fail to be in complete understanding of every one of your own league's regulations. A good opportunity to discuss these is at the individual league meeting prior to each season.

As a starting list, make sure that you have answers to the following questions:

1. Has the league adopted the optional suspended game rule? (See Section 5.7, "Optional Suspended Game Rule.")
2. What is the league curfew (if any)? Are there certain periods during the season that the curfew is not in effect?
3. How does the league president want you to inform him of ejections and other "trouble?"
4. Does the league have an "equipment violation" policy (for example, regarding equipment thrown in disgust of an umpire's call)? If so, what is the league policy, and how is it to be enforced?
5. Specifically when (if ever) are the umpires in charge of postponement responsibility prior to the start of a game? (See Section 2.6, "Right to Postpone.")
6. What is the lineup card format? Must a player be listed on the card in order to play?
7. Is there a league limitation on the number of persons that may confer on the pitcher's mound at any one time?
8. Does the league president have a preference or procedure as to how he wants the game balls to be handled at the end of a game? Does he want them returned to the home club at the end of the game? Does he want the balls taken back to the umpires' room?
9. Does the league have a policy on a "designated pitcher?" (That is, must a non-pitcher be listed specifically as a "designated pitcher" ("DP") on the lineup card in order for him to pitch in a game?)
10. What is the league's policy regarding game participation of traveling (roving) coaches and instructors? (See Section 3.3, "Roving Coaches and Instructors.")
11. Does the home team last-bat advantage transfer to the visiting city when a game is "transferred" and rescheduled as part of doubleheader in the opposing city?
12. If a PBUC umpire becomes ill or injured during a game, does the league have a policy regarding players used as base umpires?
13. Does the league have any other specific regulations not mentioned elsewhere?

### 1.5 RULE BOOK

Good umpiring means a complete knowledge of and proficiency in all Official Baseball Rules, interpretations, policies, regulations of Minor League Baseball and their respective leagues, including those contained in this manual. Umpires shall enforce rules, interpretations and regulations without regard to personal preference or opinion. Umpires must display good common sense during the application of rules. You should



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read some portion of the rulebook each day.

## **1.6 PROFANITY**

Profanity that is audible to fans in the stands will not be tolerated. Umpires should not use profanity on the field; they are subject to the same disciplinary action as team members. Umpires should never use any language toward a player or manager which would result in disciplinary action if directed towards an umpire.

## **1.7 UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT**

All umpires must wear the uniform, including authorized logos, as prescribed by the Professional Baseball Umpire Corp. The plate umpire has the option of wearing a shirt, plate coat or rain jacket. Base umpires have the same option except that all base umpires must be identically attired. *Once in uniform, no umpire is to appear in public areas of the ballpark other than under extenuating circumstances.*

Umpires are to keep their uniforms in good condition. Shoes should be polished, shirts and pants should be clean and pressed, and caps should be in good condition.

Triple A umpires who are called up to the Major Leagues during the season are not to wear their Major League shirts or caps when returning to their minor league assignment.

**IT IS MANDATORY IN ALL NATIONAL ASSOCIATION LEAGUES THAT THE PLATE UMPIRE USE AN INDICATOR DURING THE GAME.** Also, it is advisable that one of the umpires carry a watch (not on his wrist) in case of possible rain situations or curfews.

## **1.8 SUNGLASSES**

Minor League umpires may wear sunglasses on the field if approved by their league president. If worn, the sunglasses must be an appropriate type that project a professional image. In no cases should umpires place the sunglasses on top of their heads, attach them to their belts or allow them to be visible when not in use.

## **1.9 PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

- **Dress Code:** Umpires should dress in a manner befitting of the profession. Dress slacks, collared shirts and dress shoes are recommended. Jeans, shorts and tennis shoes are not considered acceptable dress to and from the park. Socks shall be worn by all umpires.

- **Grooming:** All Minor League umpires are to be well-groomed. Hair style and length should be in a manner consistent with your profession. Umpires should be clean shaven; mustaches, goatees and other facial hair are not permitted.

- **Tattoos:** Umpires will not exhibit tattoos that supervision determines may be offensive to on-field personnel and fans (for example, tattoos that have associations that are obscene, sexual, racial or religiously intolerant), or extensive tattoos of any kind. Extensive tattoos are those covering an arm or hand exposed while in the assigned uniform, or visible above the collarbone and visible with an open collar shirt.

### **1.10 FRATERNIZATION**

Umpires must not carry on idle conversations with coaches or players during the progress of a game or with other umpires unless proper officiating of the game requires it.

### **1.11 REPORTING TROUBLE**

Anything that is not “routine” should be called in to the league office early the next morning or, at the discretion of the league president, the night of the game. Examples of this include violations of the On-Field Behavior Policy, contact with an umpire, protested games, etc. The identical report should then be filed with the league office and the Executive Director of the Professional Baseball Umpire Corp. within twenty-four hours. A report must also be filed with the league president any time a warning is issued giving all specifics of the incident. Extreme care should be taken in preparing the report.

### **1.12 INCIDENT REPORTS**

In preparing your reports, remember that they are actually legal documents and that others may be privileged to examine them. Tell precisely what happened and the exact language that was used. Be sure of your facts and confine your report to the facts only. Do not editorialize. Give facts, and the situation will take care of itself. In fashioning the report, do not say a manager or player was “run” or “chased;” instead say, “removed” or “ejected.”

Take extreme care in preparing your reports. Make sure spelling and punctuation are correct. Always proofread the report to make sure it is free of errors and clear to the reader.

All Incident Reports must be filed with the Executive Director of the Professional Baseball Umpire Corp. and the respective league within twenty-four hours after the incident or within the league specified time frame.

### **1.13 COOPERATION WITH PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION**

Always cooperate with the news media when possible. Avoid arguments and refer any controversial matters to the league president. Coordinate with television personnel when games are televised.

Umpires should cooperate with press, radio and television personnel in explaining controversial plays which occur in the game and events happening during an on-field situation. In the discussion, umpires should realize they are not to suggest any action the league president might take after receiving the report of the incident.

In a protested game or a controversy over an interpretation of a playing rule or a ground rule which will be decided by the league president, the umpire should not prejudge the action the league president will take, and in these cases it would be better for the umpire to refer the matter to the league president. However, the umpire can certainly explain what actually happened on the field.

In situations where a manager, coach or player is ejected from a game, all the umpire need do is tell the press, radio or television personnel that the man was ejected for something he said, or for some gestures he used, or for violating the rule against arguing balls and strikes, etc.

Umpires are required to use judgment in answering various questions which the press, radio and television personnel ask them. These people want further facts so they can write a more informative story for the fans. There is no restriction on the umpire commenting to the extent of relating the actual facts of the decision. In fact, such cooperation helps to get the matter properly before the fans through the press, radio or television.

**1.14 UMPIRE INJURIES**

When two umpires are working a game and an umpire is forced to leave a game due to injury or illness, the game should proceed with the remaining umpire working behind the plate with full gear. **Under no circumstances should the umpire call pitches from behind the mound.** If league policy dictates, each team should be asked to nominate one player or coach to umpire on the bases with the duties being determined by the professional umpire working the plate.

If an umpire should be injured during a game, regardless of the severity of the injury, and regardless as to whether or not he was forced to leave the game he must file an accident/injury report with the league president and with the Professional Baseball Umpire Corp. office within twenty-four hours. It is extremely important that these reports be filed even if the umpire feels that no further treatment will be required.

**1.15 RATING CRITERIA, SCALE AND STANDARDS**

Umpires in all Minor League Baseball leagues are evaluated by the Professional Baseball Umpire Corp. in four categories, and employ the rating criteria below:

**PLATE**

- Feet, body, head positioning
- Timing
- Judgment/Consistency of strike zone
- Style and form of calls
- Use of voice
- Reactions to development of plays
- Positioning for plays
- Judgment of plays
- Communication with partner(s)
- Knowledge of Two/Three-Umpire Mechanics

**BASES**

- Reactions to development of plays
- Positioning for plays
- Timing for plays
- Judgment of plays
- Style and form of calls
- Communication with partner(s)
- Knowledge of Two/Three-Umpire Mechanics

**EFFORTS AND PROFESSIONALISM**

- Focus
- Hustle
- Mobility
- Demeanor
- Appearance
- Eagerness to learn and improve
- Willingness to accept constructive criticism
- Relationship with crew and others
- Professionalism on and off the field
- Administrative duties

**GAME AND SITUATION MANAGEMENT**

- PBUC/League policies & procedures
- Knowledge/Application of rules and interpretations
- Situation management

**Section I: Conduct and Responsibilities of Umpires**

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Below is the rating scale used by the Professional Baseball Umpire Corp. when evaluating umpires in all Minor League Baseball leagues:

<b>SUPERIOR</b>	Performance demonstrates exceptionally high degree of competence and knowledge of the category.
<b>ABOVE STANDARD</b>	Performance well above standard and better than most umpires.
<b>MEETS STANDARD</b>	Performance standard for most umpires; functional and competent.
<b>MARGINAL</b>	Performance marginally acceptable; corrective action required to prevent unacceptable performance.
<b>BELOW STANDARD</b>	Performance clearly unacceptable.

**PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND STANDARDS**

**PLATE**

- **Feet, body, head positioning:** Demonstrates proficiency in the following areas of the plate stance: Heel/instep relationship, torso lean, squared shoulders, head height, head depth, level shoulders and eyes, setting at proper time, stability, working in the slot and adjustments with catcher.
- **Timing:** Demonstrates consistent timing on pitches, check swings and developing plays.
- **Judgment/Consistency of strike zone:** Demonstrates accurate and consistent judgment on the outer, inner, upper and lower portions of the strike zone with determining factors such as fastballs, breaking balls, right-handed vs. left-handed hitters, etc.
- **Style and form of calls:** Projects signals that are visible, crisp, clear and decisive. Intensity of call increases with closeness of the play.
- **Use of voice:** Projects effective voice with proper volume, authority, assertiveness and tone.
- **Reactions to development of plays:** Exhibits proper understanding of play development by correctly anticipating how and at what speed the play will occur.
- **Positioning for plays:** Displays effective positioning by establishing the proper angle and distance for the developing play.
- **Judgment of plays:** Exhibits objective, impartial and accurate judgment for routine and non-routine plays (including check swings and rule infractions).
- **Communication with partner(s):** Demonstrates effective visual and verbal communication including pre-play signals, hand signals and verbal commands during plays.
- **Knowledge of Two/Three-Umpire Mechanics:** Adheres to the established mechanics as outlined in the Mechanics for the Two-Umpire System or Three-Umpire System.

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## **BASES**

- **Reactions to development of plays:** Exhibits proper understanding of play development by correctly anticipating how and at what speed the play will occur.
- **Positioning for plays:** Displays effective positioning by establishing the proper angle and distance for the developing play.
- **Timing for plays:** Demonstrates consistent timing for developing plays.
- **Judgment of plays:** Exhibits objective, impartial and accurate judgment for routine and non-routine plays (including check swings and rule infractions).
- **Style and form of calls:** Projects signals that are visible, crisp, clear and decisive. Intensity of call increases with closeness of the play.
- **Communication with partner(s):** Demonstrates effective visual and verbal communication including pre-play signals, hand signals and verbal commands during plays.
- **Knowledge of Two/Three-Umpire Mechanics:** Adheres to the established mechanics as outlined in the Mechanics for the Two-Umpire System or Three-Umpire System.

## **EFFORTS AND PROFESSIONALISM**

- **Focus:** Demonstrates consistent concentration and alertness for both basic and crucial elements throughout the entire game.
- **Hustle:** Demonstrates movement “with a purpose” during the play to create proper positioning. (**NOTE:** Walking on the field is not an acceptable technique unless the distance is so short that running is not practical.)
- **Mobility:** Possesses and demonstrates the physical ability to create proper position for the play. This includes smoothness of running style, coordination, and agility.
- **Demeanor:** Displays a conscientious desire to carry out on-field duties by exhibiting an appropriate level of confidence and assertiveness, a commanding (in-charge) presence, and a proper conveyance of body movements.
- **Appearance:** Exhibits good physical condition, posture, body movements and mannerisms. Appears professional in uniform.
- **Eagerness to learn and improve:** Displays a strong dedication and desire to succeed. Exhibits a commitment to excellence through self-improvement in carrying out requirements of the Official Baseball Rules, as well as procedures, policies, and ideals set forth by PBUC and the respective league.
- **Willingness to accept constructive criticism:** Displays effective listening skills while being receptive, attentive and respectful. Responds appropriately to adversity and criticism.
- **Relationship with crew and others:** Demonstrates respect and concern for partners and others, leads by example, motivates, inspires confidence and mutual respect.
- **Professionalism on and off the field:** Consistently gives best effort and represents profession in an outstanding manner by exhibiting honesty, dependability

and responsibility. Avoids excessive casual, unnecessary conversation (fraternization) with uniformed personnel and spectators during the game.

- **Administrative duties:** Properly submits Incident Reports in a timely manner while being accurate, clear and complete. Communicates effectively with PBUC, league office, clubs and stadium personnel. Submits Rules Review answer sheet on time.

### **GAME AND SITUATION MANAGEMENT**

- **PBUC/League policies & procedures:** Exhibits knowledge of, adherence to, and proper application of policies and procedures as set forth in the PBUC Umpire Manual and by the umpire's respective league.

- **Knowledge/Application of the rules and interpretations:** Adheres to and properly applies rules, accepted practices and interpretations detailed in the Official Baseball Rules and the PBUC Umpire Manual.

- **Situation management:** Maintains game control by taking charge and conveying an appropriate level of authority. Shows proper self-control by remaining poised, calm and even-tempered. Properly handles situations such as arguments, warnings, ejections and unexpected or volatile situations.

### **1.16 RESPONSIBILITIES OF CREW CHIEFS**

Specific Crew Chief duties include, but are not limited to:

- Enforcing the rule prohibiting visitors in the umpire's dressing room. (See Section 2.3, "No Visitors in Dressing Rooms.")

- When weather or other circumstances dictate, communicating with the groundskeeper during the game if it becomes necessary to utilize the grounds crew to cover or repair the field or to have lights turned on.

- Making the final decision in the case of conflicting rulings as provided for in Official Baseball Rule 9.04(c).

- Making any decisions regarding delays or if a game is to be officially called or forfeited. When an umpire other than the Crew Chief is working home plate, such umpire must consult the Crew Chief before suspending play because of weather.

- Overseeing the transfer of lineup cards and other pertinent information for any suspended game in which his crew is involved.

- Discussing matters with media representatives as detailed in Section 1.13, "Cooperation with Press, Radio and Television."

- Encouraging, initiating and leading periodic discussions and reviews of situations, plays and rules with the crew.

- Ensuring that the crew's dress to and from the ballpark complies with PBUC policies. (See Section 1.9, "Personal Appearance.")

- Ensuring that each General Manager is informed upon arrival in a city the crew's presence, starting times and contact information. (See Section 2.1, "Upon Arrival to City.")

- Assuring that the crew properly utilizes the Mechanics for the Three-Umpire

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System or Four-Umpire System. The Crew Chief should hold discussions regarding mechanics before opening day and whenever a new umpire joins a crew. These discussions should include such topics as ejections, crew consultations, pre-play signals, line drive responsibilities, etc.

- Ensuring the accuracy and timely filing of all required reports.
- Reporting to the league office, if observed or reported to the Crew Chief, any irregularity in field conditions at any ballpark or other non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with any other regulation or rule set forth by the league office, the Official Baseball Rules or policies contained in this manual. Such irregularity may include condition of the home or visiting pitching mounds, security control, markings or non-markings of the playing surface, communication problems with the grounds crew, suspected illegal equipment, violations with regard to audio or video replay at the ballpark, ground rule irregularities, etc.

## SECTION 2

### GAME PRELIMINARIES

#### 2.1 UPON ARRIVAL TO CITY

Upon arriving in a city to fulfill your assignment, the Crew Chief is to inform by phone to the top executive operating the ball club of the crew's presence and check with that person on the starting times of games in the series that are to be handled by the crew. The Crew Chief is also to inform the club of the phone number where the crew may be reached while in that city. **Do not fail to do this. Many daytime games and double-headers are scheduled. Be sure you know all starting times.**

#### 2.2 ARRIVAL AT BALLPARK

Umpires should arrive at the ballpark no later than **one hour** prior to the scheduled starting time of the game. The individual league president may specify an earlier arrival time.

On a crew's first visit to each city, umpires should arrive early enough to walk around the ballpark and familiarize themselves with ground rules and irregularities of the park that could affect play. Crews are required to report to the league office any irregularity concerning field conditions or club violations of requirements set forth by the league office, the Official Baseball Rules or this manual.

Umpires are to stay out of club offices unless official business requires otherwise. Similarly, umpires should be cautious regarding casual fraternization with club employees. Each umpire has duties to perform once at the ballpark, and over-familiarity with club officials should not be one of them.

All umpires are to abide by the "NO ADMITTANCE" rule posted outside each dressing room.

Umpires should be completely dressed and ready to take the field fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled starting time should a sudden emergency arise.

#### 2.3 NO VISITORS IN DRESSING ROOMS

No visitors shall be permitted at any time in the umpires' dressing rooms. The term "visitors" shall include club officers and employees, newspaper, radio and television representatives, photographers, friends and relatives. No one except the umpires, umpire supervisors, league officers and the clubhouse attendant assigned to the umpires' room shall be permitted in these rooms before, during or after a ball game. **There are no exceptions to this rule.** The umpire-in-chief shall be responsible for its enforcement and for reporting any violations to the league president.

Minor League Baseball has furnished each club with printed posters of the "NO ADMITTANCE" regulation. This regulation shall be posted outside the entrance to the



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umpires' dressing rooms and shall be strictly enforced.

## 2.4 BASEBALLS

The home club will deliver a supply of regulation baseballs to the umpires before the start of a game. The number and make of the baseballs will be certified by the league president. Umpires will inspect all baseballs and ensure that they are properly rubbed prior to being placed into the ballbag for each game. Certainly all baseballs delivered to the umpires before the game for rubbing should get into the ballbag for the game. The game bag is then to remain in possession of the umpires and carried properly with them onto the field.

During the course of a game umpires should be cautious about checking baseballs unnecessarily. As an example, asking to check the ball automatically at the end of each inning can lead to a player tossing a ball to an umpire when the ball is in play and there are only two out.

Because of the potential for injury, managers, coaches, players and umpires are not to throw baseballs into the stands or towards a patron.

Baseballs are a very costly item of playing equipment for a club. **Every effort should be taken to get as much game use as possible before discarding as unfit (consistent with good standards of play) any baseball.**

***Theft of baseballs by an umpire will be grounds for immediate dismissal.***

## 2.5 OFFICIAL WATCH

When a game is to be played under a curfew or time limit or when inclement weather is forecast, one umpire on the crew should carry a watch (not on his wrist), and his watch shall be considered official.

## 2.6 RIGHT TO POSTPONE

The management of the home team shall be the sole judge as to whether a game shall not be started because of unsuitable weather conditions or the unfit condition of the playing field except for the second game of a doubleheader.

Note, however, that some leagues have a provision for transferring the responsibility of postponement to the umpires when clubs meet for the final time during the season. For example, certain leagues give the umpires sole responsibility for postponing the start of a game during the last series between two clubs in either city. Other leagues give the umpires this responsibility only for the very last series in which the clubs meet. Other leagues have no provision for this whatsoever. In any case, it is **essential** that the umpires always work closely with the general manager in such games.

**Make certain** that you are thoroughly familiar with the manner in which your league president wants you to handle these situations.

## 2.7 MEETING AT HOME PLATE

It is important that the umpires do their part in attempting to start every game at the advertised starting time. Unless an official of the home club or the league office has given prior notice that the official starting time will be delayed, all umpires are to

enter the field together and proceed directly to home plate five minutes prior to starting time. To this end, the umpires should arrive at home plate together as a crew promptly five minutes before the scheduled starting time (an accurate watch should be used). In some parks, based on pre-game formats, five minutes may not be sufficient to start the game on time. For the first game of the series, the umpires should arrive a minute or two early in order to allow for extra time needed for the ground rules. When the umpires arrive at home plate, the plate umpire will always stand directly behind home plate and base umpire(s) will stand in fair territory directly in front of the plate until the home team takes the field.

### 2.8 GROUND RULES

Ground rules are not permitted to conflict with Official Baseball Rules (see Official Baseball Rule 3.13). Conflicts or problems with ground rules should be reported immediately to the league office by the umpire-in-chief. Be very sure that you are thoroughly familiar with ground rules before a game is started. Crews shall survey the park in ample time prior to a game to acquaint themselves of all physical peculiarities of the park. Umpires should not hesitate to ask questions about ground rules during the meeting at home plate prior to a game.

### 2.9 NATIONAL ANTHEM

Heads are to be erect, facing the flag (not lowered facing the ground), and there is to be absolutely no talking, laughing, spitting or chewing during the playing of the National Anthem.

### 2.10 POSITIONS PRIOR TO START OF GAME

After the playing of the National Anthem, the base umpire(s) should jog to a position approximately midway between first and second base (and between second and third base in a three-umpire system), a few feet onto the outfield grass. Umpires should make sure at this time that there are no obvious infractions apparent on the playing field (open gates, equipment lying on the field, chairs pulled away from the bullpen wall, etc.) - until the catcher throws the last warm-up pitch to second base. At this time he (they) should **jog (not sprint)** to his (their) position(s) at first base (and third base) to start the game.

While the starting pitcher (or any relief pitcher) is warming up on the mound, the plate umpire **shall** go behind the catcher and observe a few pitches on each side.

As the catcher throws the last warm-up pitch to second base, the plate umpire should come in and dust off home plate and then ready himself behind home plate to start the game. The plate umpire should then glance around to make sure there are no obvious playing field violations. Then, after the lead-off batter gets set in the batter's box and the pitcher takes his position on the rubber, the plate umpire shall call out "Play!" in a loud, strong, emphatic voice to begin the game.

### 2.11 POSITION BETWEEN INNINGS

Base umpires are to **jog (not sprint)** to their position at the start and end of each inning. The proper position for base umpires between innings and during pitching changes is a few steps onto the outfield grass, approximately midway between first and

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second (or between second and third). On trips to the mound by a manager or coach, with runners on base, the base umpires shall hold their positions. Umpires should not stand in a position between innings or during pitching changes which prompts conversation with players, managers or coaches.

The proper position for the plate umpire between innings is on the first or third base foul line, one-fourth to one half the way up the line from home plate. On trips to the mound by a manager or coach the plate umpire shall position on the opposite foul line of the defensive team's dugout.

The idea in each of these positions is for the umpire to be in a "neutral" position between innings, one which does not prompt conversations or confrontations with players, coaches or managers.

If the plate umpire is having trouble during a particular inning, he is to go to the **opposite** foul line from that team's dugout between innings. The same holds true for base umpires. That is, if trouble can be expected from a player coming onto the field to take his position between innings, the base umpire should not station himself in an area which prompts a confrontation with that player.

There are no specific restrictions regarding the umpires' stance between innings other than they are to remain alert and professional. Body language should not reflect an appearance of being aggressive, challenging, "cocky," overly relaxed, lackadaisical, bored, etc. There is no specific restriction regarding folding of arms in front of the chest, hands on hips, or arms and hands behind the back, other than the umpires' appearance should not suggest any of the terms referred to earlier. Hands in pockets does not appear professional and should be avoided on the field.

Following "Strike Three" whether called or swinging for the third out, the plate umpire should go to the opposite foul line of any potential problem. For example, if the right fielder has just struck out to end an inning and his dugout is on the first base side of the field, the plate umpire should go to the third base foul line between innings. (**NOTE:** In certain situations, the plate umpire should use common sense to determine to which foul line he should go.)

## **2.12 LOCATION OF GROUNDSKEEPER**

Always check with the groundskeeper to determine where he will be located in the event it is necessary to bring out the grounds crew to cover the field or to turn on the lights.

## **2.13 DRAGGING INFIELD**

In ballparks that drag the infield during the course of the game, clubs should be instructed that the infield should not be dragged until the completion of the fifth inning. The umpire-in-chief has the authority to forbid the dragging of the infield if, in his judgment, the completion of the game may be in jeopardy by the action.

## **2.14 AFTER A BALL GAME**

If the umpire-in-chief returns his unused supply of baseballs to the ball attendant, he should give them directly to the attendant or drop them directly into the game bag. He is not to toss them across the field to the attendant or toward the game bag.

## **Section 2: Game Preliminaries**

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At the conclusion of a game, umpires should refrain from congratulating fellow umpires while still on the field.

## SECTION 3

### EQUIPMENT, PLAYERS AND THE PLAYING FIELD

#### 3.1 PROTECTIVE GEAR

All players shall wear a double ear-flap helmet while at bat. All runners shall wear a protective helmet while on base. (**NOTE:** Major League players on a rehab assignment with a Minor League club may wear a single ear-flap helmet while at bat in a Minor League game.)

All bat/ball boys or girls shall wear a protective helmet while performing their duties. This rule is to be strictly enforced by the umpire and all club personnel.

All catchers shall wear a catcher's protective helmet while fielding their position.

No player is allowed to use material or equipment that is, in the umpire's judgment, contrary to the intent and spirit of Official Baseball Rules 1.10 through 1.17.

If, during the course of a game, a manager has a complaint regarding the use of hitter's protective elbow pads, the plate umpire or crew chief should file an Umpire's Incident Report regarding the complaint to the League Office following the game. Umpires should not prohibit the use of protective elbow pads during the course of a game.

#### 3.2 CONDUCT OF PLAYERS DURING PROGRESS OF GAME

No one except the manager, coaches, players and substitutes in uniform (including players on the disabled list), batboys in uniform, trainers, member of conditioning staff, security and equipment or property person may occupy the bench or bullpen during the progress of the game. All other personnel must exit the bench or bullpen area before game time.

Visitors are not allowed on the players' bench or on the field at any time during the progress of the game.

Players in the bench area may not sit in photographer stands adjacent to dugout during the game.

During the progress of a game, all players of the club at bat must be on the bench except when they have some duty to perform such as coaches, baserunners, batter or on-deck batter. Players of the side at bat will not be permitted to fraternize with players in the bullpen, either of their own or of the visiting club, but must come to their own bench even if, in their judgment, they are not likely to bat in the inning. Base runners retired before reaching first base or put out on the bases must return to the bench until the inning is ended.

Only pitchers, catchers and players serving as catchers should be permitted to stay in the bullpen during the game.

A substitute player who will enter the game at the end of the half inning or a designated hitter who will enter the game as a defensive player will be permitted to warm

up in the bullpen.

Other than provided in Official Baseball Rule 3.03, fielders may take warm-up throws with each other only during a period of extended delay (i.e., game pitcher ejected or injured player), provided it does not delay the game.

Players removed from the game (other than by an umpire) may warm up pitchers and may act as base coaches.

### 3.3 ROVING COACHES AND INSTRUCTORS

So-called “roving” or traveling coaches and instructors are allowed on the team’s bench or in the bullpen during the game provided that they are in full uniform (uniform of the parent Major League club is permissible).

*Only if league regulations permit* may such traveling personnel be allowed to take an active part in the game and/or enter the playing surface during a game. In such cases they must be in the uniform of the Minor League team.

Traveling coaches and instructors should not address or complain to the umpires during the game, as their purpose at the game is that of player development, and their presence on the team bench is that of a courtesy.

Should the coach/instructor violate any of these provisions, he may, **after being warned**, be removed from the game by the umpire.

### 3.4 PLAYERS ON DISABLED LIST

Players on the disabled list are permitted to participate in pre-game activity and may sit in uniform on the bench during a game but may not take part in any activity during the game such as warming up a pitcher, bench jockeying, etc. Disabled players are not allowed to enter the playing surface at any time or for any purpose during the game.

### 3.5 ON-DECK CIRCLE

The next batter up must be in the on-deck circle, and this is the only player who should be there (i.e., **not more than one player at a time**). This shall be strictly enforced. No other player of the side at bat will be permitted on the field except the batter, base runners and coaches.

### 3.6 BASE COACHES

Do not begin an inning unless both base coaches of the offensive team have taken their positions on the field.

### 3.7 COACHES POSITIONED OUT OF COACH’S BOX

It has been common practice for many years for some coaches to put one foot outside the coach’s box or stand astride or otherwise be slightly outside the coaching box lines. Until a batted ball passes a coach, the coach is not permitted to position himself closer to home plate than the coach’s box nor closer to fair territory than the coach’s box. Otherwise a coach shall not be considered out of the box unless the opposing manager complains, in which case the umpire shall strictly enforce the rule and require

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all coaches (on both teams) to remain in the coach's box at all times.

It is also common practice for a coach who has a play at his base to leave the coach's box to signal the player to slide, advance or return to a base. This may be allowed if the coach does not interfere with the play in any manner.

### 3.8 BATS

Umpires should consult the current bat list approved by the Official Playing Rules Committee to determine if a bat may be used in a professional league.

Should a player use or attempt to use a bat which is not on the approved list of bats, the umpire is to handle the matter as described in Section 3.9, "Pine Tar on Bat."

The only approved colors for bats are natural grain, brown wood stain define, black and half stain (Walker finish). Other bats that have not been approved for use in professional leagues include: laminated, impregnated or lacquered bats.

Should a player use or attempt to use a bat which does not conform to the specifications found in Official Playing Rule 1.10(a) through (d), such infraction shall cause the bat to be removed from the game. The player would not normally be declared out or ejected for using such a bat *unless*, in the umpire's judgment, such bat has been *altered or tampered* with as described in Official Playing Rule 6.06(d) (i.e., if the distance or reaction factor has been affected). (See Section 3.9, "Pine Tar on Bat" and 3.10, "Altered or Tampered Bats.")

### 3.9 PINE TAR ON BAT

The bat handle for not more than eighteen inches from its end may be covered or treated with any material or substance to improve the grip. Any such material or substance which extends past the eighteen-inch limitation shall cause the bat to be removed from the game.

**NOTE:** If the umpire discovers that the bat does not conform to this regulation until a time during or after which the bat has been used in play, it shall not be grounds for declaring the batter out or being ejected from the game.

Official Baseball Rule 6.06(d) prohibits the use of "doctored" bats. The use of pine tar in itself shall not be considered doctoring the bat.

(See Section 3.10, "Altered or Tampered Bats.")

### 3.10 ALTERED OR TAMPERED BATS

Official Baseball Rule 6.06(d) provides that the batter be declared out and ejected from the game if such batter **uses or attempts to use** a bat that has been altered or tampered with in such way as to improve the distance factor or cause an unusual reaction to the ball. This rule applies to bats that have been corked, filled, flat-surfaced, nailed, hollowed, grooved or covered with a substance such as paraffin or wax. The rule does not apply to bats that have pine tar extending beyond the 18-inch limit. (See Section 3.9, "Pine Tar on Bat.")

The phrase "**uses or attempts to use**" shall be interpreted as bringing an illegal bat into the batter's box (i.e., stepping into the batter's box).

The umpire should stop a batter from using an **obviously** illegal bat if the umpire notices it before the batter uses it. This would include bats that violate Official Baseball Rule 6.06(d) as well as bats that do not conform to Official Baseball Rule 1.10 or the annual bulletin on approved bats. Such bat shall be removed from the game and, if appropriate, forwarded to the league president for examination. (See Section 3.8, “Bats” and Section 3.9, “Pine Tar on Bat.”)

Anytime an illegal bat is removed, it is to be placed in a secure area for the duration of the game.

If a manager suspects an opposing player of using or attempting to use a corked or improperly treated or altered bat, the manager may request the umpire-in-chief to inspect and impound the bat. If the umpire’s visual inspection reveals no irregularities, the bat will be further examined either in the city where the game is played or at the league president’s office. Each manager is limited to making the request one time per game. **The request must be made either prior to or after the batter has batted.** The actual process of batting will not be interrupted.

Notwithstanding the manager’s right to one challenge per game, the umpires may at any time during game, or before or after a game, inspect and/or impound a bat or bats for testing. If during the game, such action by the umpires would be in addition to the challenge rights of the manager.

Should it be discovered by direct, immediate observation by the umpire during play that a player is using or attempting to use an illegal bat, the provisions of the Official Baseball Rule 6.06(d) fully apply and will result in the player being declared out and ejected from the game. No advancement on the bases will be allowed, and any out or outs made during a play with such illegal bat shall stand.

The challenge of a bat by an opposing manager or the umpire inspecting a bat does not constitute grounds for an official protest of a game.

### 3.11 PITCHER’S AND FIELDER’S GLOVES

Any pitcher starting or entering the game wearing a colored glove must wear the same colored glove for the entire game.

As provided in Official Baseball Rule 1.15, the pitcher’s glove may not, exclusive of piping, be white, gray, nor, in the judgment of the umpire, distracting in any manner. A fielding glove or mitt may not, exclusive of piping, be white or gray.

If the umpire deems that the pitcher’s glove is distracting, the umpire shall have the glove removed from the game (or have the distracting portion removed, if possible).

If the opposing manager complains that the pitcher’s glove is distracting, the umpire shall decide if the manager’s complaint has merit, and in such case have the glove removed.

Pitchers’ gloves that have long lacing or strings attached to them may serve as a distraction to the batter. If, in the umpire’s opinion, glove material causes a batter to be distracted, the umpire may order the pitcher to either remove or cut off the leather string or other distracting material.

The rules pertaining to the pitcher’s uniform, sweatshirt and glove are designed to prevent the pitcher from using artificial means to distract a batter.



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### 3.12 OVERSIZED GLOVES

See Official Baseball Rules 1.12, 1.13, and 1.14 regarding measurements of gloves. An umpire may measure a questionable glove at his discretion, or the opposing manager may request a glove be measured. Each manager is limited to **two** such requests per game. **All measurements will be taken by the umpire between innings only.** If the glove is illegal, it shall be removed from the game. A player refusing to obey the umpire's order may be ejected from the game. Play that has occurred prior to the measurement will be allowed to stand. An Incident Report must be filed.

### 3.13 BATTING GLOVES

No pitcher shall be allowed to wear a batting glove while pitching. Other defensive players may wear a batting glove on their glove hand, but they shall not rub the ball with the batting glove on their hand.

### 3.14 CATCHER'S MITT

The catcher may not substitute a fielder's glove or a first baseman's mitt for a catcher's mitt during the progress of the game or on any individual play. The catcher may use a mitt with a vinyl fluorescent piece attached.

### 3.15 SHOES

All players, coaches, and managers must wear the same basic color of shoes, but the design of different manufacturers is allowed.

Players shall not wear shoes with pointed spikes similar to golf or track shoes. Excessive or distracting flaps on shoes, particularly those on pitchers, will not be allowed. Players may not call time to change shoes upon becoming a base runner.

### 3.16 JEWELRY

Players, especially pitchers, will not be allowed to wear distracting jewelry of any kind. This prohibition also applies to pins and other items being attached to any portion of the uniform (including the cap) or playing equipment.

### 3.17 JACKETS

A pitcher may wear a jacket while a base runner. A pitcher may not wear a jacket while batting. No other **player** is permitted to wear a jacket while a base runner, a batter, a defensive player or a coach on the baselines. If worn, the jacket must be buttoned.

**NOTE:** If league policy permits, a **player** may wear a jacket while serving as a coach.

### 3.18 FIRST BASEMAN PLAYING IN FOUL TERRITORY

Official Baseball Rule 4.03 provides that when the ball is put in play at the start of or during a game, all fielders other than the catcher shall be on fair territory. In particular, when holding a runner on first base, the first baseman shall position himself with both feet in fair territory. There is no penalty specified for violation other than the first baseman shall be instructed to keep both feet in fair territory if brought to the attention of the umpire, or - if blatant or recurring violation - upon immediate direction of the umpire.

If a player, after so directed by the umpire, blatantly refuses to comply, the player is subject to ejection.

#### 3.19 BATTER'S POSITION IN BATTER'S BOX

When the batter **assumes a batting stance** in the batter's box, he shall have both feet entirely within the batter's box; i.e., no part of either foot may extend beyond the outer edge of the lines defining the box when the batter assumes a position in the box. There is no penalty specified for violation other than the batter shall be instructed to stay within the batter's box if brought to the attention of the umpire, or - if blatant or recurring violation - upon immediate direction of the umpire. If a player, after so directed by the umpire, blatantly refuses to comply, he is subject to ejection. (See Official Baseball Rule 6.03.)

Under Official Baseball Rule 6.06(a), if a batter **hits** a ball (fair, foul or foul tip) with one or both feet on the ground **entirely** outside the batter's box, he shall be declared out.

**NOTE:** There are two different rules regarding the batter's position in the batter's box. Official Baseball Rule 6.03 requires the batter to have both feet within the batter's box when assuming an initial position in the box prior to hitting (no portion of the foot may be outside the line under this provision, although no penalty is prescribed other than the instructions given above). Official Baseball Rule 6.06(a) provides that the batter be declared **out** if he **hits** the ball with one or both feet on the ground **entirely** outside the batter's box. (So long as any part of the foot is touching any part of the line when the batter **hits** the ball, he is within the rules.)

#### 3.20 BATTER STEPPING OUT OF BATTER'S BOX

1. Once a batter has taken his position in the batter's box, he shall not be permitted to step out of the batter's box in order to use the resin or the pine tar rag unless there is a delay in the game action or, in the judgment of the umpires, weather conditions warrant an exception. This rule is to be strictly enforced.

2. If after the pitcher starts his windup or comes to a "set position" with a runner on, he does not go through with this pitch because the batter has stepped **completely** out of the box with **both feet**, the umpire shall not call a balk. The umpire shall call an automatic strike if Official Baseball Rule 6.02(d)(1) calls for such sanction. However, in situations when the batter steps out of the box with **only one foot** and the pitcher does not go through with his pitch, the umpire shall call time and both batter and pitcher start over from "scratch."

#### 3.21 BATTER REFUSES TO TAKE POSITION IN BATTER'S BOX

Official Baseball Rule 6.02(c) provides that if the batter refuses to take a position in the batter's box during a time at bat, the umpire shall call an automatic strike on the batter. The proper mechanic is for the umpire to call "Time" and then signal "Strike."

The rule also provides that after calling an automatic strike on the batter, the umpire shall give the batter a reasonable opportunity to take his position in the batter's box before calling a subsequent strike.

**NOTE:** Keep in mind that this rule is different from Official Baseball Rule 6.02(d)

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(1) where the umpire shall award a “Strike” when the batter steps out of the box when none of the exceptions listed in the rule applies.

### **3.22 ARGUING BALLS AND STRIKES**

Players **leaving their position** in the field or on base, or managers or coaches **leaving the bench or coach’s box** to **argue** balls and strikes will not be permitted. They should be **warned** if they start for the plate or otherwise leave their position to protest the call. If they continue, they will be ejected from the game.

### **3.23 EJECTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS**

Under Official Baseball Rule 4.07, if a manager, player, coach or athletic trainer is ejected from a game, he shall leave the field immediately and take no further part in that game. He shall remain in the clubhouse or change to street clothes and either leave the park or take a seat in the grandstand well removed from the vicinity of his team’s bench or bullpen. He may not stand in the dugout runway and under no circumstance may he return to the dugout or field after he has been ejected.

If a person who has been ejected continues to appear in the runway area, umpires should not delay the game by repeatedly insisting that the person leave. In such instances, the offender has seriously violated the rules, and the umpiring crew shall report this fact to the league president.

If a manager, coach, player or athletic trainer is under suspension, he may take part in his team’s activities prior to the start of the game. During the term of the suspension, he shall leave the field before the game starts, change to street clothes, and either leave the park or take a seat in the stands well removed from the vicinity of his club’s bench or bullpen. If under suspension, he may not be in the dugout or pressbox during the course of the game.

A manager who has been suspended shall take no part in the direction of his team during a game, either directly or indirectly.

### **3.24 PLAYER CHARGING THE PITCHER’S MOUND**

A batter, runner or other player charging or pursuing the pitcher will receive an automatic fine (**minimum** \$450 at Class AAA, \$300 at Class AA, \$150 at Class A Advanced, \$75 at Class A Short-Season and Rookie) and a **minimum** three-game suspension. (See Section 9.18, “On-Field Behavior Policy.”)

Any player who charges the pitcher - that is, in the umpire’s judgment moves a reasonable distance toward the pitcher with the intention of fighting with the pitcher - shall be automatically ejected from the game. Any instance of a batter moving toward a pitcher and retaining his bat as he moves will be the subject of severe disciplinary action.

### **3.25 ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT**

The use of electronic equipment during a game is restricted. No club shall use electronic equipment - including cellular telephones and laptop computers - to communicate to or with any on-field personnel, including those in the dugout, bullpen, field, and during the game, the clubhouse. Such equipment may not be used for the purpose of stealing signs or conveying information designed to give a club an advantage.

Cellular phones, including any type of portable or mobile phone, paging device or similar portable equipment are prohibited on the bench and the playing field at all times. Laptop computers are not permitted on the bench or dugout.

*Umpires will be notified prior to the start of the game which field personnel will be wearing microphones.*

No umpire will be miked or use a camera during a ballgame unless approved by the league office.

Instructional taping by team personnel will be permitted from the dugouts or in the stands.

### **3.26 ORGANISTS, SCOREBOARDS; VIDEO AND AUDIO**

Clubs should instruct their organists not to play when the ball is about to be put into play. The organ should stop playing as soon as the hitter is in the batter's box and the pitcher is on the rubber. Organists are not to play in a manner that will incite spectators to react in a negative fashion to umpires' decisions.

For the purpose of this rule, the word "organist" shall include coverage of other music in the park, the P.A. announcer and the scoreboard operator.

Should any Video or Audio guidelines be violated by a club, umpires should not stop the game to have the matter corrected. Rather, the general manager of the home club should be contacted directly by the umpire-in-chief between innings, after the game, or during a point in the game that does not delay action. **Umpires are to inform the league office of details concerning any violation.**

During an argument if a manager, coach or player makes reference to having observed a video replay that purportedly contradicts the call under dispute, such person should be **warned** immediately to stop or he will be subject to ejection from the game.

### **3.27 TEAM MASCOTS**

Team mascots are not to interfere in any manner with the duties of the umpires during the progress of the game. This would include - but is not limited to - approaching the umpires during or between innings while making motions intended to reflect upon the integrity of the umpires. This would also include approaching the umpires and inciting, or trying to incite, by word or sign a demonstration by spectators.

If a team mascot intends to involve an umpire into his "act" in any manner, this should be cleared with the umpiring crew before the start of the game.

Umpires should not allow mascots to be on the field while the ball is alive and in play.

### **3.28 DUGOUT AND BULLPEN SAFETY**

For the safety of all on-field personnel it is imperative that umpires strive to ensure that all equipment, including but not limited to balls, bats, gloves, etc. be confined to the dugout when not in use.

No equipment is permitted to be left on the top step (lip) of the dugout. If a ball hits equipment left on the top step, it is dead.

Chairs should not be permitted on the playing field unless specifically authorized

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in the ground rules.

In ballparks where the bullpen is on the field of play, umpires must not allow bullpen chairs and benches to be pulled away from the wall and angled towards the diamond. This presents a serious problem regarding ground rules and potential interference.

Umpires should instruct players to keep chairs and benches against the side wall. If a player is defiant and refuses, the manager should be informed, and if the problem persists, the player is subject to ejection.

## **SECTION 4**

### **LINEUPS AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

#### **4.1 LINEUP CARDS**

It is recommended each manager write the name of each eligible player on the face of his club's batting order card in addition to furnishing the starting lineup. **League regulations may require ALL eligible players to be listed on the club's batting order card before entering the game.** If not required, a manager's failure to list an eligible player does not prevent that player from entering the game, nor is such failure grounds for protest, as the listing of eligible players is simply a courtesy.

The home club manager, coach or representative must first deliver his batting order, in duplicate form as furnished by the league (some leagues are in triplicate), to the umpire-in-chief. As soon as this batting order is delivered, the umpires are in charge of the playing field, and from that moment they shall have sole authority to determine when a game shall be called, suspended or resumed on account of weather or the condition of the playing field. (See also Section 5.10, "Lineups and Postponed/Suspended Games.")

Next, the visiting club manager, coach or representative shall deliver his batting order, in duplicate (or triplicate) form as furnished by the league, to the umpire-in-chief. The visiting club manager or representative does not have the right to examine the home club's batting order until he has given the plate umpire his batting order.

The umpire-in-chief shall then make certain that the original and copies of the respective batting orders are identical and that there are no obvious errors in either batting order. After he has determined that the copies are identical and that there are no obvious errors, he shall hand each manager copies of the batting orders. The copy of the batting order that is retained by the umpire shall be official.

If either manager takes out a player after receiving his copy of the batting order, the player so removed cannot thereafter appear in that game.

While at the home plate meeting with both managers, it is recommended that if a club is utilizing the designated hitter, the plate umpire verbally verify the name of the designated hitter and the starting pitcher. This will help avoid further problems during the course of the game.

#### **4.2 ERRORS IN BATTING ORDER**

Obvious errors in the batting order which are noticed by the umpire-in-chief before he calls "Play" for the start of the game should be called to the attention of the manager of the team in error so the correction can be made before the game starts. For example, if a manager has inadvertently listed only eight men in the batting order or has listed two players with the same last name but without an identifying initial and the errors are noticed by the umpire before he calls "Play," he shall cause such error or errors to be corrected before he calls "Play" to start the game. Teams should not be "trapped" later

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by some mistake that obviously was inadvertent and which can be corrected before the game starts.

### 4.3 BATTING OUT OF TURN

In batting out of order situations, there are two fundamentals to keep in mind:

1. When a player bats out of turn, the **proper** batter is the player called out.
2. When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and a pitch is made to the next batter of either team (or a play or attempted play is made) before an appeal is made, the improper batter is thereby **legalized**, and the results of his time at bat become legal. The batting order then picks up with the name following the legalized improper batter.

Any advance or outs made because of an improper batter becoming a runner would be nullified if the defensive team appeals at the proper time. (Outs made because of a pickoff or out attempting to steal while the improper batter is at bat are legal.) Play is to revert back to the position of the runners at the time the improper batter took his position in the batter's box (with the exception of advances covered in the Note of Official Baseball Rule 6.07(b) or outs made on a pickoff or steal play while the improper batter is at bat).

If a player who has batted out of order is legally on base because no proper appeal was made at the time the player batted out of turn and it becomes his proper turn at bat, the player is to remain a base runner, and the batter who properly follows such player in the batting order becomes the proper batter.

#### EXAMPLES:

**Play 1:** Runners on first and third. Charles bats in place of Baker. Charles grounds to short; runner forced at second; Charles beats relay to first; runner on third scores. An appeal is made.

**Ruling 1:** Baker is declared out. Runners return to first and third. Charles is next batter.

**Play 2:** Runners on first and third. Charles bats in place of Baker. Charles grounds to short; runner forced at second; Charles is out at first for double play; runner on third scores. An appeal is made.

**Ruling 2:** Baker is declared out. Runners return to first and third. Charles is next batter.

Umpires are reminded that the **only** way the defense may gain an out in a batting out of order situation is for the defense to appeal **immediately after** an improper batter has completed his turn at bat and **before** a pitch is made to the next batter of either team, or before any play or attempted play. The reason for this is because any time a pitch is made to the next batter after an improper batter has batted, the improper batter that has just batted immediately becomes legal at that moment, and the batting order then picks up with the name following that improper batter (who has just batted and who has now become legal).

Consider the following example where the correct batting order is A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I, and, for some reason, a team is batting in the order A-B-D-C-E-F-G-H-I. That is, C and D are batting in reversed order throughout the game:

If the batting out of order error is not brought to the umpire's attention, play will proceed throughout the game without reference to the batting out of order. However, suppose one inning that B is the correct lead-off batter and gets a base hit. D then comes to bat. D is an improper batter, and if this error is brought to the attention of the umpire while D is at bat, C will replace D with the count then on D (no penalty).

However, suppose that the defense does not appeal during D's at bat and D gets a base hit, which puts B on second and D on first. If the defense now appeals before the next pitch (or play or attempted play), C - who was the **proper** batter - is declared out, B returns to first base, and D is now the next batter.

However, if nothing is said after D's base hit and one pitch is thrown to C, this immediately legalizes D's actions (the batter who just batted), and now the proper batter is E. If the defense appeals while C is batting (i.e., after one or more pitches have been thrown to C), E shall then come to bat with the count then on C.

However, suppose that no appeal is made while C is at bat and C gets on base to load the bases (B is now on third, D on second and C on first). If the defense now appeals, note that the first pitch to the last batter (C) legalized the man who appeared at bat just before him (D). That made E (the name following D in the lineup) the proper batter, since C has just completed an at bat (instead of E), and since the defense is appealing before the next pitch, E is then declared out, B returns to second, D returns to first and F is the next batter.

Suppose, however, that no appeal is made after C's at bat, and the next batter to appear at bat is E. If one pitch is thrown to E, this immediately legalizes the actions of the batter who just appeared at bat (C). So now if the defense appeals (after one or more pitches to E), the proper batter would be D. However, since D is already on base, the rules provide that we skip over his name and go on to E, who is already currently at bat anyway. In that situation, E has now become the proper batter, and the original batting order would continue on from that point.

The preceding example may seem somewhat complicated, but the key to unraveling all batting out of order situations is again to remember the following points:

1. In order to gain an out in a batting out of order, the defense must appeal immediately after an improper batter has completed his turn at bat and before the next pitch (or play or attempted play).
2. If the defense does appeal at the correct moment, the **proper** batter is always the player called out.
3. Any time an improper batter completes a time at bat and a pitch is then made to the next batter, the improper batter (who has just batted) immediately becomes legal at that moment, and the batting order then picks up with the name following that improper batter (who has now become the proper batter).

Another way of looking at this last point is to remember the following statements: As soon as a pitch is made to a batter, the man who batted just before him always becomes



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legal, even if he was an improper batter to begin with. The correct next batter will then be the name which follows the man who has just finished his at bat.

There is one final and very important point for umpires to remember concerning batting out of order: *If the defense appeals that there has been a batting out of order, the umpire need only concern himself with the **last two** batters.* The reason for this is that we know that no matter who just batted, the man who batted immediately before him was **legal** (proper). Therefore, the correct last batter will always be the name which follows the player who batted immediately before the last batter who was pitched to (received a pitch).

The Approved Rulings to Official Baseball Rule 6.07 include other examples of batting out of order.

## 4.4 DESIGNATED HITTER

A hitter may be designated to bat for the starting pitcher and all subsequent pitchers in any game without otherwise affecting the status of the pitcher in the game. A designated hitter for the pitcher must be selected prior to the game and must be included in the lineup card presented to the plate umpire.

It is not mandatory that a club designate a hitter for the pitcher, but failure to do so on the lineup cards handed to the plate umpire precludes the use of a designated hitter for that game.

The designated hitter listed in the starting lineup must complete at least one time at bat (he is put out or becomes a base runner) unless the opposing club changes pitchers or that designated hitter becomes injured, ill or ejected before fulfilling his obligation to bat once.

Pinch hitters for a designated hitter may be used. Any substitute hitter for the designated hitter becomes the designated hitter. A replaced designated hitter shall not re-enter the game in any capacity.

A runner may be substituted for the designated hitter, and the runner then assumes the role of the designated hitter.

A designated hitter is “locked” into the batting order. No multiple substitutions may be made that will alter the batting rotation of the designated hitter.

Once the **game pitcher** bats for the designated hitter, this move shall terminate the designated hitter’s role for the remainder of the game. **(The only person the game pitcher may pinch hit for is the designated hitter.)**

If a **designated hitter** assumes a defensive position, this move shall terminate the designated hitter’s role for the remainder of the game. Since the designated hitter is “locked” in the batting order, the designated hitter must continue to bat in that slot. The pitcher must then bat in place of the substituted defensive player (unless more than one defensive substitution is made, and then the manager must designate their spots in the batting order to the umpire).

If a **game pitcher** is switched from the mound to a defensive position, this move shall terminate the designated hitter’s role for the remainder of the game. The pitcher just removed from the mound may bat in the designated hitter spot in the batting order; or, if more than one defensive change is made, the pitcher may bat in place of any one

of the substituted players (manager shall designate to the umpire).

It is permissible for both the **designated hitter** and the **game pitcher** to go into the field at the same time (i.e., the game pitcher switches from the mound to a defensive position and the designated hitter goes into the field). Such a move will terminate the designated hitter role for the remainder of that game. Since the designated hitter is “locked” in the batting order, the designated hitter must continue to bat in that slot. The pitcher then bats in place of any one of the substituted defensive players (manager shall designate to the umpire).

If a **defensive player** goes to the mound (i.e., replaces the game pitcher), this move shall terminate the designated hitter’s role for the remainder of the game.

If a **pinch hitter** bats for any player and then **enters the game to pitch**, this move shall terminate the designated hitter’s role for the remainder of the game.

The designated hitter may not serve as a pinch runner.

A substitute for the designated hitter need not be announced until it is the designated hitter’s turn to bat.

The designated hitter may not sit in the bullpen unless he is serving as a catcher in the bullpen.

(See also Official Baseball Rule 6.10.)

### 4.5 MAKING SUBSTITUTIONS

A player or players may be substituted during a game at any time the ball is dead.

The manager shall immediately notify the umpire-in-chief of any substitution and shall state to the umpire-in-chief the substitute’s place in his batting order.

A substitution is completed and the player considered as having entered the game when the manager notifies the umpire-in-chief of such substitution. If no such notification is given or if after notification no announcement is made, the player shall be considered as having entered the game when:

1. If a pitcher, he takes his place on the pitcher’s plate prior to delivering a pitch (preparatory or otherwise);
2. If a batter, he takes his place in the batter’s box;
3. If a fielder, he reaches the position usually occupied by the fielder he has replaced, **and play commences**;
4. If a runner, he takes the place of the runner he has replaced.

**All** lineup changes **must** be confirmed by the **manager** of the club. After the umpire is informed of the change, he is to make the change on his lineup card. He will then point out the change to the pressbox by first holding up an open hand to the pressbox and then pointing to the substitute(s) on the field. As a courtesy the opposing manager should be informed of the change, but the umpire is not to go all the way to the dugout or all the way over to the opposing manager to do this. Rather, he will verbally get the attention of the manager and inform him of the substitution and/or point out the substitute to the manager. An exception to this would be when multiple substitutions are announced, and in this case the plate umpire may need to confer directly with the opposing manager. In those situations, the umpire should meet the manager halfway.

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**NOTE:** If a pitcher has been brought into the game but has not faced one batter (or retired the side) when the game is stopped for weather, such pitcher may, but is not required to, continue pitching when the game is resumed. (See Section 5.10, “Lineups and Postponed/Suspended Games.”)

Refer also to Official Baseball Rules 3.03, 3.06, 3.07 and 3.08 for further information concerning substitutions.

## 4.6 MULTIPLE SUBSTITUTIONS AND DOUBLE-SWITCHES

When two or more substitute players of the defensive team enter the game at the same time, the manager shall, **immediately before** they take their positions as fielders, designate to the plate umpire such players’ positions in the team’s batting order and the plate umpire shall notify the official scorer. If this information is not **immediately** given to the plate umpire, he shall have the authority to designate the substitutes’ places in the batting order.

When a manager makes two or more substitutions at the same time, the manager must, **at the same moment**, advise the plate umpire the names of the substitutes, their defensive positions, and in what place each will hit in the batting order. The manager cannot give notice of one of the substitutions, leave the umpire, come back to the plate umpire, and locate the other player in the lineup. In case the manager fails or refuses to make a decision, the plate umpire is authorized to decide the necessary batting order changes, and the umpire’s decision is final. When the substitutions are legal, announcements should be made over the public address system. (The P.A. announcer should not make announcement of any substitution until so advised by the plate umpire.)

If a manager wishes to change pitchers along with one or more other defensive players (intending to interchange the batting order), he must inform the umpire **before** calling for the new pitcher. Motioning to the bullpen is to be considered an official substitution for the new pitcher.

There is no requirement that the manager or coach announce to the umpire a double-switch before crossing the foul line. However, the manager or coach must do so before signaling for the new pitcher.

It is **not** permissible for the manager to go to the mound, call for a **new pitcher**, and **then** inform the umpire of multiple substitutions with the intention of interchanging the batting order. The plate umpire **must** be informed of the multiple substitutions **before** the manager calls for a new pitcher (if the manager wishes to interchange the batting order).

**Play 1:** A manager goes to the mound and talks with the pitcher. The plate umpire goes out to break up the conference, and while on the mound the manager informs the umpire that he wishes to make a double-switch.

**Ruling 1:** Legal, provided the manager has not signaled to the bullpen prior to informing the umpire of the multiple substitutions.

A manager may give the umpire a double-switch while defensive players are entering the playing field. However, in the unlikely event that the unannounced pitcher takes a position on the pitching rubber before the manager confers with the umpire, Official Baseball Rule 3.08 (a)(1) provides that such pitcher to have entered the game. In such

case, a subsequent attempt by the manager to make a double-switch shall not be allowed.

The opposing manager should be informed of multiple substitutions and should be given the proper batting position of each substitute.

**NOTE:** When the manager goes to the plate umpire to inform the umpire of a double switch involving a new pitcher, the plate umpire should **immediately** signal to a base umpire to go to the bullpen for a new pitcher. This speeds play up significantly as opposed to the base umpire having to wait until the conference with the plate umpire is completed and then watching for the manager to signal to the bullpen. In such cases, the plate umpire should give a clear signal in case there is more than one pitcher warming up.

If two or more defensive substitutions are made at the same time, make certain that the pressbox is clearly informed as to the substitutes' positions in the batting order. This should be done using the "flip-flop" signal or the "straight up" signal to the pressbox after pointing out the substitutions. Sometimes the umpire may have to verbally or visually announce to the pressbox in what position a particular substitute is batting. For example, if several substitutions have been made, the umpire may have to announce to the pressbox, "New pitcher is batting fifth," while holding up five fingers to the pressbox after pointing to the pitcher. There is no need for a "straight up" signal when only one substitute enters the game.

Once again, also make certain that the opposing manager is always informed of the multiple substitutions and is given the proper batting position of each substitute.

### 4.7 UNANNOUNCED SUBSTITUTES

If a player's name appears in the original batting order and before he appears at bat, another player takes this player's position on the field or at bat and no notification is made to the umpire, the player shall be considered as entering the game only as a substitute player. This is not a batting out of order situation where the opposing manager could protest later in the game. As provided in Official Baseball Rule 3.08(b), any play or any hit made by such unannounced substitute would be legal.

### 4.8 ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTIONS

Under Official Baseball Rule 3.03, if a player who has been substituted for attempts to re-enter, or re-enters, the game in any capacity, the umpire-in-chief shall direct the player's manager to remove such player from the game immediately upon noticing the player's presence or upon being informed of the player's improper presence by another umpire or by either manager. If such direction to remove the substituted-for player occurs before play commences with the substituted-for player improperly in the game, then the substitute player may enter the game. If such direction to remove the substituted-for player occurs after play has commenced with the substituted-for player in the game, then the substitute player shall be deemed to have been removed from the game (in addition to the removal of the substituted-for player) and shall not enter the game.

Any play that occurs while a player appears in a game after having been substituted for shall count. If, in an umpire's judgment, the player reentered the game knowing that he had been removed, the umpire may eject the manager.

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**TO CLARIFY:**

A player who is ineligible to play (i.e. already substituted for) re-enters the game:

1. If noticed before play commences, put the correct player into the game, no further penalty, and no need for a “new substitute.”
2. If play has commenced, when brought to the umpire-in-chief’s attention:
  - a) Remove the illegal player.
  - b) Remove the substitute player who should have been there.
  - c) A new substitute shall enter that position.
3. Either manager, or any umpire may bring the violation to the umpire-in-chief at any time.
4. Any play that results from an illegal player being in the game shall stand.
5. This has no effect on the unannounced substitute rule.

**4.9 SUBSTITUTE FOR INJURED OR DISABLED PLAYER**

Any player (other than a pitcher) who is substituted for an injured or disabled player shall be allowed five warm-up throws. (See Official Baseball Rule 8.03.)

## SECTION 5

### PROGRESS OF GAME

#### 5.1 TURNING ON LIGHTS

The umpire-in-chief shall order the playing field lights turned on whenever in his opinion darkness makes further play in daylight hazardous.

After a game has been started, the umpire-in-chief is to be the sole judge as to when field lights are to be turned on. He should call for the lights **before** the beginning of a full inning **unless some extraordinary condition or abnormally long inning prompts otherwise**. Umpires are instructed to use good judgment when asking for the lights. Umpires are to signal to turn off the lights when they are no longer needed during day games.

#### 5.2 BETWEEN GAMES OF A DOUBLEHEADER

Prior to the first game starting, the umpire-in-chief shall advise both managers of the length of time (e.g. 25 minutes) between games.

The second game of a doubleheader shall begin no later than **thirty minutes** after the first game is completed unless a longer interval is requested by the home management and announced to the opposing manager at the end of the first game. The second game may begin prior to thirty minutes.

Teams that routinely fail to begin games at the scheduled or agree upon starting times shall be reported to the league office.

Under all conditions the first game of a doubleheader must be completed before the second game may be started.

When play is suspended because of rain early in the first game of a doubleheader, umpires must be certain to wait an adequate length of time before calling off the game because if the first game is postponed, the second game must be postponed as well.

**At the conclusion of the first game, the umpire-in-chief shall advise both managers of the exact starting time of the second game. The plate meeting for the second game shall commence five minutes prior to the agreed upon starting time.**

The umpire-in-chief of the first game is the timekeeper and sole judge as to whether or not the second game is to start. The home club manager or management has no jurisdiction in determining this.

Between games of a doubleheader, the umpire-in-chief shall have control of the groundskeeper and assistants for the purpose of making or keeping the playing field fit for play.

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## 5.3 RAIN SITUATIONS

The umpire-in-chief shall be the sole judge as to whether and when play shall be suspended during a game because of unsuitable weather conditions or the unfit condition of the playing field; as to whether and when play shall be resumed after such suspension; and as to whether and when a game shall be terminated after such suspension. He shall not call the game until **at least thirty minutes** after he has suspended play. He may continue the suspension as long as he believes there is any chance to resume play. The umpire-in-chief shall be the sole judge in determining the length of suspension once "Time" has been called.

The umpire-in-chief shall at all times try to complete a game. His authority to resume play following one or more suspensions shall be absolute, and he shall terminate a game only when there appears to be no possibility of completing it.

If available, the umpire-in-chief should check the local radar at the ballpark when rain is likely. Modern weather technology has improved the prediction of rain in local areas, and umpires should know fairly accurately at game time what the weather conditions are likely to be. When a game starts under threatening weather conditions, the umpire-in-chief should contact the groundskeeper and advise him to have his crew in readiness to handle field covers and drying materials. As soon as the umpire-in-chief receives the lineup cards, he shall become the sole judge as to whether or not a game is to continue. After time has been called because of weather conditions, Official Baseball Rule 3.10(c) authorizes the umpire to terminate the game after a wait of **at least thirty minutes**; but if in his judgment there is any chance to resume play, he may continue such suspension as long as his judgment warrants. In rain situations **it is essential that umpires work with the executive-in-charge**, as the home club goes to great expense and obligation for each opening.

Between games of a doubleheader or whenever a game is suspended because of the unfitness of the playing field, the umpire-in-chief shall have control of the groundskeeper and assistants for the purpose of making the playing field fit for play.

During a rain delay, keep the following points in mind:

1. During the suspension of play, the umpire-in-chief shall remain on one of the club's benches to observe the conditions and see that the playing field is tended to properly.
2. In games when weather is threatening, one member of the crew should carry a watch (not on his wrist). That umpire should note the time immediately when play is suspended.
3. Keep in communication with the general manager and/or the groundskeeper during the delay concerning weather developments.
4. The decision to terminate a game shall be made on the field and not in the dressing room.
5. It's imperative during all weather situations that umpires are aware of league policy.

A game should not be called without the umpire-in-chief finding out some of the problems that confront the club and to make sure the home club is prepared for cancellation. Before an umpire calls a game, he is to discuss the matter with the executive-in-charge. Also, before calling a game, the umpires are to consult within view of the stands. The

consultation adds support to the decision.

If there is a second or subsequent delay in the same game, the umpires must wait **at least thirty minutes** after any such delay before calling the game.

### 5.4 CURFEWS AND TIME LIMITS

In making a decision as to when to invoke a curfew or time limit, the umpire shall rule that an inning or half-inning starts immediately after the third out is made in the preceding inning.

### 5.5 SUSPENDED GAMES

If a league adopts the optional suspended game rule (Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a) (7) through (9)), see Section 5.7, “Optional Suspended Game Rule.” If a league has NOT adopted these rules, the following regulations shall apply regarding suspended games:

1. If a game is terminated because of **light failure, mechanical malfunction or darkness**, it shall be a suspended game at any time after it starts.

2. If a game is terminated because of a **curfew or time limit**, it shall be a suspended game only if it has progressed far enough to be a regulation game under Official Baseball Rule 4.10. If such game has not progressed far enough to be a regulation game, it shall be declared **no game** and must be replayed in its entirety.

3. If a game is terminated because of **weather** during an incompleting full inning, it shall be a suspended game (provided it has progressed far enough to be a regulation game under Official Baseball Rule 4.10) if during the incompleting inning:

a) The visiting team has scored one or more runs to tie the score, and the home team has not scored;

or

b) The visiting team has scored one or more runs to take the lead, and the home team has not tied the score or retaken the lead.

If such game has not progressed far enough to be a regulation game, it shall be declared **no game** and must be replayed in its entirety.

4. If a game is called before it has become a regulation game, it is **no game** and must be replayed in its entirety (unless Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a)(3) or (4) causes it to be a suspended game). (See paragraph 1 above in this section.)

5. Any **regulation** game called due to weather with the score tied shall become a suspended game. (See Official Baseball Rule 4.10(d) and 4.12(a) and (b).)

### 5.6 REGULATION GAMES, OTHER RELATED TERMS

Under Official Baseball Rule 4.10(c), if a game is called off, it is a **regulation game** if:

1. **Five innings** have been completed;

or

2. **Four and a half innings** have been completed and the home team is ahead;

or



3. The home team scores one or more runs in its half of the **fifth inning to tie** the score.

There are other terms that are sometimes used when talking about regulation games or suspended games. These include terms such as “official game,” “postponed game,” “complete game,” etc. Definitions for these terms are given on the following page to help in understanding regulation and suspended games:

<b><i>official game</i></b>	Same as regulation game. (See definition on previous page.)
<b><i>complete game</i></b>	Same as regulation game. (See definition on previous page.)
<b><i>legal game</i></b>	Same as regulation game. (See definition on previous page.)
<b><i>called game, called off or called</i></b>	A game in which for <b>ANY</b> reason the umpire-in-chief terminates play.
<b><i>suspended game</i></b>	A game which has been called off but will be resumed from the exact point of suspension and completed at a later date. (See Section 5.5, “Suspended Games” and 5.7, “Optional Suspended Game Rule.”)
<b><i>postponed game</i></b>	A game which has been called off and must be replayed in its entirety at a later date. This term can also refer to a game which is called off before the game is started (due to unfit playing conditions of the field, for example). The term is also sometimes improperly used to apply to a suspended game. For example: “Tonight’s game has been postponed because of light failure and will be resumed tomorrow prior to the regularly scheduled game.” It would be correct for the person to say, “Tonight’s game has been suspended because of light failure and will be resumed tomorrow prior to the regularly scheduled game.”
<b><i>no game</i></b>	A game which has been called off and must be replayed in its entirety at a later date (usually because the game was called off before it became a regulation game).

**5.7 OPTIONAL SUSPENDED GAME RULE**

If a league adopts the optional suspended game rule, the following regulations shall apply:

1. **If a game is called off BEFORE it becomes a regulation game, it shall become a SUSPENDED game.** (See Section 5.6, “Regulation Games, Other Related Terms.”)
2. **If a game is called off at any point with the score TIED, it shall become a**

**SUSPENDED game.**

3. If a game is called off because of **LIGHT FAILURE** (or **DARKNESS** or **MECHANICAL MALFUNCTION**), it shall become a **SUSPENDED game** at any time **after it starts**. For example, if a game is called off in the eighth inning because of light failure, it shall become a **SUSPENDED GAME** and must be completed in accordance with paragraph 6 below. Similarly, if a game is called off in the second inning because of light failure, it would also be a suspended game.

4. If a game is called off because of a **CURFEW** or **TIME LIMIT**, it shall become a **SUSPENDED game** at any time after it starts.

5. If a regulation game is called off because of **WEATHER** during an **INCOMPLETED INNING**, it shall become a **SUSPENDED game** **IF** during the **incompleted inning** the visiting team has scored one or more runs to take the lead, and the home team has not tied the score or retaken the lead. (See Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a)(5).)

6. In accordance with Official Baseball Rule 4.12(c), such a suspended game must be resumed and completed from the exact point of suspension as follows:

a) Immediately preceding the next scheduled **single game** between the two clubs on the same grounds;

or

b) Immediately preceding the next scheduled doubleheader between the two clubs on the same grounds **if no single game remains on the schedule**;

or

c) If the game was suspended on the last scheduled date between the two clubs in that city, transferred and played on the grounds of the opposing club:

i) immediately preceding the next scheduled single game;

or

ii) immediately preceding the next scheduled doubleheader between the two clubs if no single game remains on the schedule.

7. If the suspended game was called off **before** it had become a regulation game, the regular game following the completion of the suspended game shall be a **seven-inning** game.

8. If the suspended game was called off **after** it had become a regulation game, the regular game following the completion of the suspended game shall be a **nine-inning** game.

9. **The optional suspended game rule DOES NOT APPLY to games that are rained out AFTER they have become a regulation game (UNLESS the score is tied when the game is called off or unless Official Rule 4.12(a)(5) applies).** For example, if a game is rained out during the sixth inning, it is an "official" game, and the final score would be the score at the time the game was called off **UNLESS**:

a) the score was **tied**, in which case it would become a suspended game under paragraph 2 on the previous page;

or

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b) the game falls under Official Rule 4.12(a)(5), in which case it would become a suspended game under paragraph 5 above.

10. If a suspended game has not been completed prior to the last scheduled game between two clubs during the championship season, it shall become a called game.

11. The optional suspended game rule shall NOT be in effect:

a) during the last scheduled game between two clubs during the championship season;

or

b) during league playoffs.

12. Under these regulations as well as under the Official Baseball Rules, **there is no provision whatsoever regarding “reverting back to the last completed inning” when a game is called off.**

***Each year every league files with the Minor League Baseball office its intention or non-intention of using the optional suspended game rule. All umpires must make absolutely certain before the start of the season whether or not their league is using this rule.*** (See Section 1.3, “League Regulations.”)

#### **EXAMPLES:**

**Play 1:** A game is rained out at the end of the third inning with the home team leading 3-2.

**Ruling 1 (using optional suspended game rule):** Since the game was rained out before it became a regulation game, the game becomes a **suspended** game and must be resumed at the exact point of suspension immediately preceding the next scheduled single game between the two clubs in the same city as provided under Official Baseball Rule 4.12(c). (See item 6 on the previous page.) The regularly scheduled game following the completion of this suspended game would be a **seven-inning** game.

**Ruling 1 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Since the game was called off before it became a regulation game, the game is declared **no game** and must be replayed in its entirety at a later date.

**Play 2:** At the end of the seventh inning a game is tied 2-2. The game is rained out after the eighth inning with the score still 2-2.

**Ruling 2 (using optional suspended game rule):** Since the score was tied when the game was called off, the game becomes a **suspended game**. The game following the completion of this suspended game would be a nine-inning game.

**Ruling 2 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Exactly the same as above ruling.

**Play 3:** A game is rained out at the end of the sixth inning with the home team leading 3-2.

**Ruling 3 (using optional suspended game rule):** Home team wins the game 3-2.

**Ruling 3 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Home team wins the

game 3-2.

**Play 4:** At the top of the seventh inning the home team is leading 3-2. In the top of the eighth inning the visiting team scores two runs to make the score 4-3. The game is rained out during the bottom of the eighth inning with the score still 4-3 in favor of the visiting club.

**Ruling 4 (using optional suspended game rule):** This is a suspended game under Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a)(5). (See Item 5 on page 37.) When the suspended game is completed, the game following would be a nine-inning game.

**Ruling 4 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Exactly the same as the previous ruling.

**Play 5:** At the end of the seventh inning the home team is leading 3-2. In the top of the eighth inning the visiting team scores one run to tie the score 3-3. The game is rained out during the bottom of the eighth inning with the score still tied 3-3.

**Ruling 5 (using optional suspended game rule):** This is a suspended game for two reasons. First, the game was called off with the score tied. Under the optional suspended game rule (see Item 2 on page 36), any game called off with the score tied is a suspended game. Second, this game is also a suspended game under Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a)(5). When the suspended game is completed, the game following would be a nine-inning game.

**Ruling 5 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** This is a suspended game under Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a)(5). The game following the completion of this suspended game would be a nine-inning game.

**Play 6:** At the end of the seventh inning the home team is leading 3-2. In the top of the eighth inning the visiting team scores two runs to make the score 4-3. In the bottom of the eighth inning the home team scores one run to tie the score 4-4. The game is rained out during the bottom of the eighth inning with the score still tied 4-4.

**Ruling 6 (using optional suspended game rule):** Since the score was tied when the game was called off, the game becomes a suspended game. The game following the completion of this suspended game would be a nine-inning game.

**Ruling 6 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Exactly the same as the above ruling.

**Play 7:** At the end of the fourth inning the visiting team is leading 3-2. In the bottom of the fifth inning the home team scores one run to tie the score. Before the fifth inning can be completed, the game is rained out with the score tied 3-3.

**Ruling 7 (using optional suspended game rule):** Since the score was tied when the game was called off, the game becomes a suspended game. Note that this game is a regulation game under Official Baseball Rule 4.10(c)(3). (See Section 5.6, "Regulation Games, Other Related Terms," Item 3.) Therefore, the game following completion of this suspended game would be a nine-inning game.

**Ruling 7 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Exactly the same as the

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above ruling.

**Play 8:** At the end of the fourth inning the visiting team is leading 3-2. In the bottom of the fifth inning the home team scores two runs to make the score 4-3. Before the fifth inning can be completed, the game is rained out.

**Ruling 8 (using optional suspended game rule):** Home team wins the game 4-3.

**Ruling 8 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Home team wins the game 4-3.

**Play 9:** A game is called off because of light failure during the third inning with the home team leading 3-2.

**Ruling 9 (using optional suspended game rule):** Since the game was called off because of light failure, the game becomes a suspended game under Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a)(3). (See Item 3 on page 36.) The game following the completion of this suspended game would be a seven-inning game.

**Ruling 9 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** This is a suspended game under Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a)(3). The game following the completion of this suspended game would be a nine-inning game.

**Play 10:** A game is called off because of light failure during the eighth inning with the home team leading 3-2.

**Ruling 10 (using optional suspended game rule):** Since the game was called off because of light failure, the game becomes a suspended game under Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a)(3). (See Item 3 on page 36.) The game following the completion of this suspended game would be a nine-inning game.

**Ruling 10 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Exactly the same as above ruling.

**Play 11:** At the end of the fourth inning the home team is leading 3-2. In the top of the fifth inning the visiting team scores two runs to make the score 4-3. The game is rained out during the bottom of the fifth inning with the score still 4-3 in favor of the visiting team.

**Ruling 11 (using optional suspended game rule):** Since the game was called off before it became a regulation game, the game becomes a suspended game. The game following the completion of the suspended game would be a seven-inning game.

**Ruling 11 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Since the game was called off before it became a regulation game, the game is declared **no game** and must be replayed in its entirety at a later date. (Note that Official Baseball Rule 4.10(e) and 4.12 do not apply to this game because the game had not become a regulation game.)

**Play 12:** At the end of the fourth inning the home team is leading 3-2. In the top of the fifth inning the visiting team scores two runs to make the score 4-3. In the bottom of the fifth inning the home team scores one run to tie the score 4-4. The game is rained out during the bottom of the fifth inning with the score tied 4-4.

**Ruling 12 (using optional suspended game rule):** Since the score was tied when the game was called off, the game becomes a suspended game. Under Official Baseball Rule 4.10(c)(3) (see Section 5.6, “Regulation Games, Other Related Terms,” Item 3), this game is a regulation game. Therefore, the game following completion of this suspended game would be a nine-inning game.

**Ruling 12 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Exactly the same as the above ruling.

**Play 13:** At the end of the fourth inning the home team is leading 3-2. In the top of the fifth inning the visiting team scores one run to tie the score 3-3. The game is rained out in the bottom of the fifth inning with the score still tied 3-3.

**Ruling 13 (using optional suspended game rule):** This is a suspended game for two reasons. First, the game was called off with the score tied. Second, the game was called off before it became a regulation game. The game following the completion of this suspended game would be a seven-inning game. (Note that Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a)(5) does not apply here because the game was not a regulation game.)

**Ruling 13 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Since the game was called off before it became a regulation game, the game is declared no game and must be replayed in its entirety at a later date.

**Play 14:** At the end of the seventh inning a game is tied 3-3. In the top of the eighth inning the visiting team scores one run to make the score 4-3. The game is rained out in the bottom of the eighth inning with the score still 4-3.

**Ruling 14 (using optional suspended game rule):** This is a suspended game under Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a)(5). (See Item 5 on page 37.) The game following the completion of this suspended game would be a nine-inning game.

**Ruling 14 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Exactly the same as the above ruling.

**Play 15:** At the end of the seventh inning a game is tied 3-3. In the top of the eighth inning the visiting team scores one run to make the score 4-3. In the bottom of the eighth inning the home team scores one run to tie the score 4-4. The game is rained out before the eighth inning can be completed with the score still 4-4.

**Ruling 15 (using optional suspended game rule):** Since the score was tied when the game was called off the game becomes a suspended game. The game following the completion of this suspended game would be a nine-inning game.

**Ruling 15 (NOT using optional suspended game rule):** Exactly the same as the above ruling.

### 5.8 WEATHER TAKING PRECEDENCE

The note to Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a) states weather and similar conditions shall take precedence in determining whether a called game shall be a suspended game. If a game is halted by weather, and subsequent light failure or an intervening curfew or time limit prevents its resumption, it shall not be a suspended game. If a game is

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halted by light failure, and weather or field conditions prevent its resumption, it shall not be a suspended game.

If play is stopped because of **weather** and during the delay (before the tarps have been removed) **light failure** occurs and causes the game to be terminated, the game will be considered as having been terminated because of **weather** and shall not be a suspended game.

If play is stopped because of **weather** and during the delay (before the tarps have been removed) **a curfew or time limit** is reached, the game will be considered as having been terminated because of **weather** and shall not be a suspended game.

However, in games that have been delayed because of **weather**, once the umpires direct the grounds crew to remove the tarps and prepare the field for play, **the weather factor is then removed**. In such cases, if light failure then occurs or if a curfew or time limit is subsequently reached, the game will be considered a **suspended** game.

If play is stopped because of **light failure** and rain subsequently occurs before play can be resumed, the umpires shall then determine the ultimate reason for terminating the game. Consider the following examples:

**Play 1:** Game stopped because of light failure; rain occurs during light failure; lights come back on during or after rain; field determined to be unplayable.

**Ruling 1:** Game called due to weather. Not a suspended game.

**Play 2:** Game stopped because of light failure; rain occurs during light failure; field determined to be unplayable and still no lights.

**Ruling 2:** Game called due to weather. Not a suspended game.

**Play 3:** Game stopped because of light failure; a light rain occurs during light failure; rain stops and field determined to be playable but still no lights.

**Ruling 3:** Game called because of light failure. This is a suspended game.

## 5.9 LINEUP CARDS FROM SUSPENDED GAMES

In a suspended game, the plate umpire must make notation on the lineup cards of the exact situation the moment play is suspended. Included should be the following information: **inning, score, outs, runners on base** (by name), **batter, count** on the batter and **defensive player due to bat** first the next inning, **number of trips to the mound** (if any) the defensive team has made during the uncompleted inning; **whether or not warnings have been issued** in the game; and **who, if any personnel, have been ejected from the game**. Any other violations or irregularities that occurred during the game should be reported to the league office.

The plate umpire of the game that is suspended shall retain the lineup cards of the two clubs if the suspended game is to be played in the same series. When the suspended game is resumed, the Crew Chief or crew shall determine who will work the plate for the completion of the game (it may or may not be the same umpire who worked the plate when the game was suspended).

The plate umpire for the resumption of the game shall take the umpire's copy of the

batting order to the plate when the suspended game is resumed, ask each manager to provide their copies of the batting orders, and be certain that the names of all players substituted for in the lineup shall be written on each manager's batting order card. A manager desiring to make eligible substitutions shall so notify the umpire at this time. The umpire shall then advise the managers of the official lineups under which the game will resume, including giving the names of the first batter to bat to the defensive team.

The game should not start unless the proper players are in the lineup. (It must be remembered that the manager has the right at the time play is resumed to substitute players in the lineup that have not participated in the previously played portion of the suspended game.) If there is any dispute as to the lineup and batting order, the official scorer shall be consulted.

In the event the suspended game is not continued in the same series, the umpire-in-chief shall forward the batting order cards of both clubs to the league office, along with the following information: **Score** and **inning** of the game at the time of suspension; number of **outs**; names of **runners** and what base each was on; name of **proper batter** and ball and strike **count**; the name of the **proper first batter** for the **defensive team**; the number of **trips made to the mound** by the defensive club (if any) during the uncompleted inning; whether or not **warnings** had been issued in the game; who, if any personnel, had been **ejected** from the game; and any other pertinent information. Any other violations or irregularities that occurred during the game should be reported to the league office by phone. As a safeguard it is suggested that the umpire-in-chief photocopy the lineup cards and retain the copy prior to forwarding the originals to the league office.

(See also Official Baseball Rule 4.12(c).)

### 5.10 LINEUPS AND POSTPONED/SUSPENDED GAMES

Should a game be called off after the lineup cards have been turned in to the umpire-in-chief but before the umpire has called "Play" to start the game, such game would be considered as having been postponed prior to starting and not be a suspended game (since the game has not officially started). The tender of the home team's batting order to the umpire-in-chief conveys control of the playing field to the umpires; this does not represent the start of the game. The game does not begin until the umpire calls "Play" to start the game. Managers would not be held to their original lineups when a game is rescheduled under such a postponement.

The Comment to Official Baseball Rule 4.12(c) states if immediately prior to a game becoming suspended, a substitute pitcher has been put into the game but has not retired the side or pitched until the batter has been put out or has become a base runner, when the game is resumed such a pitcher **may**, but is **not required to**, start the resumed portion of the game. If such pitcher does not start when the game is resumed, he will be considered as having been substituted for and may not be used in that game.

If a game is suspended during a manager's or coach's trip to the mound (or after the trip but while the same batter is still at bat), a new pitcher may be substituted when the game is resumed.

If a pitcher has been brought into the game but has not faced one batter (or retired the side) when the game is stopped for weather, such pitcher may, but is not required to, continue pitching when the game is resumed.



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No player removed for a substitute prior to the suspension may return to the lineup when the game is resumed.

When the game is resumed, any player may be replaced by a player who had not been in the game prior to the suspension.

When the suspended game is resumed, substitutions may be made for players no longer with the club or physically incapacitated. No player removed for a substitute in the original game shall be eligible to return to the lineup in the resumption of the game.

## **5.11 TEMPORARY FAILURE OF LIGHTS**

The note to Official Baseball Rule 5.10(b) states that a league may adopt its own regulations governing games interrupted by light failure. The following are the regulations to be adopted:

In the event of a temporary failure of lights while a ball is in flight or a play is in progress and the umpires are not able to follow the play because of the light failure, the umpires will immediately call "Time." If a play is in progress when such light failure occurs and further action is possible, the entire play shall be nullified. When the lights are restored, play shall resume with the same situation as existed at the start of the play that was interrupted by the light failure.

**NOTE:** If runners are being awarded bases at the time of the light failure, after the lights have been restored runners are allowed to run the bases in accordance with base-running rules.

**Play 1:** Batter hit ball out of ballpark for homerun. After the ball has left the park and runners are rounding the bases, light failure occurs.

**Ruling 1:** When the lights are restored, runners are allowed to run bases in accordance with base-running rules.

## **5.12 CREW CONSULTATION AND GETTING THE PLAY RIGHT**

As the Casebook Comments to Official Baseball Rule 9.00 point out, the first requisite as an umpire is to get all decisions ultimately correct. Umpire dignity is important - but never as important as **getting the play right**. In line with this reasoning, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. An umpire is urged to seek help when that umpire's view is blocked or positioning prevents such umpire from seeing crucial elements of a play. An umpire is also encouraged to seek help in instances when that umpire has doubt and a partner has additional information that could lead to a proper ruling.

2. Official Baseball Rule 9.02(c) states, "No umpire shall criticize, seek to reverse or interfere with another umpire's decision unless asked to do so by the umpire making it." Therefore, except in special situations such as those referred to below, the umpire making the call must be the one to seek assistance of a partner.

3. In a limited number of situations, a partner may have critical information that is unknown to the umpire making the call. When a partner is certain that the umpire making the call could benefit from such additional information, the partner should alert

the other umpire that there is additional, important information that should be shared. While the mechanic of bringing this information to the attention of the umpire who made the call is left to the crews (walking towards the partner, inconspicuous signal, etc.), crucial, potential call-changing information should not be withheld on a play that has clearly been missed. **Nevertheless, the ultimate decision to change a call rests with the umpire who made the call.**

Plays such as the following lend themselves to the philosophy described on the previous page:

1. Deciding whether a fly ball that left the playing field was fair or foul.
2. Deciding whether a batted ball left the playing field for a homerun or a ground rule double.
3. Cases where a foul tip is dropped by the catcher, causing it to become a foul.
4. Cases when an umpire clearly errs in judgment because a ball is dropped or juggled after a tag or force.
5. Spectator interference plays.
6. Balks called by an umpire who clearly did not realize the pitcher's foot was off the rubber.

### **GUIDELINES:**

1. When an umpire seeks help, the umpire should do so shortly after making the call. There should **not** be a lengthy argument with the manager that is followed by a crew conference about the call.
2. When an umpire seeks help, the conference should always take place **away from players and managers**. It is suggested that the entire crew meet, as there are cases when an "unlikely" umpire on the crew may have pertinent information.
3. Some judgment calls are not subject to reversal. These include: steal and other tag plays (except if the ball is dropped without the umpire's knowledge); force plays (when the ball is not dropped and foot is not pulled); and balls and strikes (other than checked swings). Also, some calls cannot be reversed without creating larger problems. An example is a catch/no catch situation with multiple runners.
4. Umpires may use their judgment to take any necessary steps to correct a play (within guidelines) following a crew consultation in which the original decision of the umpire was changed.
5. Umpires may place runners where necessary, ignore tag up or base running violations that were a result of the original call.
6. **Managers are not entitled to a second opinion simply because they dispute a call.**
7. If a call is reversed, managers are entitled to an explanation. However, managers should not argue about the reversal of a call when the ultimate decision is obviously correct.
8. Umpires have the discretion whether to communicate to the manager of the team the call has gone against **before** or **after** signaling the reversal of the call.

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If an umpire's error such as a missed count or number of outs clearly affects the play, every attempt should be made to correct the error, if possible.

**Play 1:** Runner on first base is stealing with a 3-1 count on the batter. The next pitch is called ball four, but the catcher throws the ball to second base anyway, and the runner is tagged before reaching the base. Umpire erroneously calls the runner out, and the runner, believing he is out, steps off the bag and again tagged by the fielder.

**Ruling 1:** The runner left second base under the assumption that the runner was out; however, the out was declared as a result of umpire error. In this situation the runner should be returned to second base. This is a correctable umpire error.

**NOTE:** In a situation where the umpire crew cannot determine the correct ball and strike count, the suggested procedure is to contact the official scorer. **Under no circumstances are the umpires to consult videotape.**

### 5.13 EXPLAINING UNUSUAL PLAYS TO THE PRESSBOX

Some effort should be made by the plate umpire to help explain unusual or odd plays to the pressbox. Normally the plate umpire will turn around after the play is over and indicate to the pressbox what has occurred. Plays of this nature would include catcher's interference, batter's interference, a balk followed by a batted ball which nullifies the balk, spectator interference, etc.

Occasionally at the Minor League level, music may continue to play from the pressbox as the pitcher is about to pitch. If this music persists in the game, the plate umpire should first step away from home plate (facing the field), call "Time" and then, if necessary, choose an opportune time to notify the pressbox to conclude the music sooner. This could be done between innings with home team management. (See Section 3.26, "Organists, Scoreboards; Video and Audio.")

### 5.14 PROTESTED GAMES

When a manager officially protests a game, claiming that an umpire's decision is in violation of the rules, he must announce the protest to the umpire-in-chief **before** the next pitch, play or attempted play. A protest arising on a game-ending play may be filed until 12:00 p.m. the following day with the league office.

If a manager officially protests a game, **all** the umpires shall confer and discuss the play or situation on which the protest is lodged. It must be determined by the crew that the umpire making the call has made a proper ruling. If the crew is certain the ruling was correct as made, the umpire-in-chief shall accept the manager's protest and have the P.A. announcer announce that the game is being played under protest. The opposing manager is to be informed that the game is being played under protest.

In accepting the protest, the umpires shall:

1. Ascertain the manager's exact reason or grounds for protest. This must be done before the protest can be accepted.
2. Confer as a crew, making certain their ruling is correct.
3. Have the protest announced over the P.A. system.
4. Make notation on the lineup cards as to the exact situation at moment of protest

(inning, score, outs, runners on base, batter, count on the batter and defensive player due to bat first the next inning).

The umpires shall report by phone to the league office that the game was protested and the reason for the protest. A detailed written report shall be sent to the league office and the Executive Director of the Professional Baseball Umpire Corp. within twenty-four hours. The lineup cards (with exact situation at moment of protest) should be photocopied and photocopy retained by the umpire crew. The original lineup cards and situation should be forwarded to the league office with the written report.

### 5.15 FORFEITED GAMES

Before declaring a game forfeited, the crew shall consult with the league office and the Executive Director of the Professional Baseball Umpire Corp.

**The Crew Chief (or crew) shall telephone the league office and the Executive Director of the Professional Baseball Umpire Corp. when any game has been forfeited** and follow such phone report immediately with a detailed written report.

**Announcements shall be made over the P.A. system that a game may be forfeited and again when the game is declared forfeited. Announcement of the possibility of a forfeit must be made to both clubs and the fans prior to a forfeit.**

### 5.16 GAME-WINNINGS RUNS

If the home team scores the winning run in its half of the ninth inning (or its half of an extra inning after a tie), the game ends immediately when the winning run is scored. **EXCEPTION:** If the last batter in a game hits a homerun out of the playing field, the batter-runner and all runners on base are permitted to score, in accordance with base-running rules, and the game ends when the batter-runner touches home plate. (See Official Baseball Rule 4.11(c).)

Official Baseball Rule 4.09(b) provides that when the winning run is scored in the last half-inning of a regulation game (or in the last half of an extra inning) as the result of a base on balls, hit batter or any other play with the bases full that forces the runner on third to advance, the umpire shall not declare the game ended until the runner forced to advance from third has touched home base and the batter-runner has touched first base. **EXCEPTION:** If fans rush onto the field and physically prevent the runner from touching home plate or prevent the batter-runner from touching first base, the umpire shall award the runner the base because of obstruction by the fans.

If the batter hits a homerun out of the playing field to win the game in the last half of the ninth or an extra inning but is called out for passing a preceding runner, the game ends immediately when the winning run is scored (**provided** the winning run touched home plate **before** the passing occurred if there were **two out**).

## SECTION 6

### APPEALS AND AWARDS

#### 6.1 PLAY OR ATTEMPTED PLAY

A key phrase in both the awarding of bases (Official Baseball Rule 7.05(g)) and in appeal plays (Official Baseball Rule 7.10) is “play or attempted play.” Note the following official interpretation:

A **play or attempted play** (Official Baseball Rule 7.05(g) and 7.10) shall be interpreted as a legitimate effort by a defensive player who has possession of the ball to actually retire a runner. This may include an actual attempt to tag a runner, a fielder running toward a base with the ball in an attempt to force or tag a runner, or actually throwing to another defensive player in an attempt to retire a runner. The fact that the runner is not out is not relevant. A fake or a feint to throw shall not be deemed a play or an attempted play.

#### EXAMPLES:

##### A play or attempted play:

**Play 1:** Runners on first and second, ground ball to the shortstop who makes a swipe at the runner from second but misses and then throws beyond first base into the stands.

**Ruling 1:** The swipe by the shortstop is an attempted play; thus the throw to first is not the first play by an infielder (even though it is the first throw), and the proper award of bases would be from the time of the throw.

**Play 2:** Runner on first and ground ball to second baseman who flips ball to the shortstop to get runner from first but who is **safe**. Shortstop throws beyond first into the stands.

**Ruling 2:** The flip by the second baseman to the shortstop is an attempted play, even though unsuccessful. The throw to first is not the first play by an infielder and thus runner should be placed from the time of the throw. Runner who was on first would score and batter-runner would be placed at second.

##### Not a play or attempted play:

- A fake or a feint to a base but not actually throwing, even though the fielder draws his arm back to feint a throw.
- A pitcher feinting a throw toward a base to hold or check a runner’s progress in order to complete an appeal play at another base.

**Play 1:** Runner on first, ground ball to the shortstop, who starts to flip the ball to the second baseman but doesn’t and throws the ball beyond first and out of play.

**Ruling 1:** The feint to the second baseman is not considered a play or attempted play and award of bases is from the time of the pitch.

**Play 2:** Runners on first and third, runner on first stealing as ground ball is hit to shortstop. The shortstop feints a throw home but does not throw - instead throws to first and into the stands. During this the runner from first has rounded second base.

**Ruling 2:** The feint by the shortstop toward home is not considered a play or attempted play; thus his throw beyond first is the first play by an infielder and awards should be made from the time of the pitch.

### 6.2 APPEAL PLAYS

Keep the following points in mind regarding appeal plays:

1. Any appeal under Official Baseball Rule 7.10 must be made before the next pitch or any play or attempted play.

(See Section 6.1, "Play or Attempted Play.")

2. If a pitcher balks when making an appeal, such act shall be considered a play. No further appeal will be allowed.

3. If the pitcher or any member of the defensive team throws the ball out of play when making an appeal, such act shall be considered an attempted play. No further appeal will be allowed on any runner at any base. (This refers to an appeal being made after a definite break in action.)

4. If the violation occurs during a play which ends a half-inning the appeal must be made before the defensive team leaves the field (pitcher and all infielders have crossed the foul lines).

5. An appeal is not to be interpreted as a play or an attempted play.

6. An appeal should be clearly intended as an appeal, either by a verbal request by the player or an act that unmistakably indicates an appeal to the umpire.

7. All fielders other than the catcher must be in fair territory to start an appeal play after "Time" has been called. If a fielder (other than the catcher) is in foul territory, the umpire should not put the ball in play. If the umpire inadvertently does so, there is no penalty (specifically, this is not a balk), nor would such action nullify a subsequent appeal attempt on the same runner once the ball is properly put back in play. A fielder may go into foul territory to back up an appeal play after the ball has been put into play.

### 6.3 RUNNER MISSES HOME PLATE

Official Baseball Rule 7.08 (k) states that should a runner in scoring fail to touch home plate and continue on his way to the bench, he may be put out by the fielder touching home plate and appealing to the umpire for a decision. However, this rule applies only where a runner is on his way to the bench and the catcher would be required to chase him. It does not apply to the ordinary play where the runner misses the plate and then immediately makes an effort to touch the plate before being tagged. In that case, the runner must be tagged. In such cases, base path rules still apply to the runner (i.e., he may not run more than three feet from the "base path" between him and home plate.)

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On a play at the plate, should the runner miss home plate and the fielder miss the tag on the runner, the umpire shall make **no signal** on the play. As outlined in the previous paragraph, the runner must then be tagged if he attempts to return to the plate; if he continues on his way to the bench, the defense may make an appeal.

A runner may no longer return to touch a missed base - home plate or otherwise - after having entered the dugout.

If two runners arrive at home plate about the same time and the first runner misses home plate but the second runner legally touches the plate, the first runner may not return to retouch home plate and may be put out on appeal. If the appeal on the runner is sustained for the third out of the inning, neither run scores. (See Official Baseball Rule 7.10(b) Approved Ruling (1).)

If home plate is missed during a time play, the umpire should immediately rule on the time play even if the runner misses the plate. The defense is required to recognize that the plate has been missed. If the defense properly appeals, the umpire should then reverse his prior decision and cancel the run.

## **6.4 APPEAL PLAYS – APPROVED RULINGS**

The following are approved rulings concerning appeal plays:

**Play 1:** Runner on first, one out. The batter doubles. Runner on first rounds the bases and tries for home. On the play at the plate, the catcher misses the tag and runner misses the plate as he slides by. As the catcher begins to chase the runner to apply a tag, the batter-runner tries for third base. Seeing this, the catcher throws to the third baseman, who retires the batter-runner. Can the defensive team still appeal at home on the runner originally on first?

**Ruling 1:** Yes. The catcher's play on the batter-runner at third base was still part of the continuous action created by and following the batted ball. Therefore, the defensive team would not lose its right to make an appeal by playing on the runner at home or the batter-runner at third and may still appeal at home.

**Play 2:** Runner on first base, one out. The pitcher attempts a pickoff but throws the ball past the first baseman down the right field line. Runner misses second base but tries for third. The right fielder's throw to get the runner at third base is too late, although he is tagged by the third baseman. Can the defense appeal at second base that the runner missed it?

**Ruling 2:** Yes. The third baseman's attempted play on the runner at third base was still part of the continuous action created by and following the aborted pickoff throw. Therefore, the defensive team does not lose its right to make its appeal by playing on the runner at third base and may still appeal.

**Play 3:** Runners on first and third, two out. The pitcher's next pitch is a wild pitch back to the screen. While the ball is being chased down, the runner on third crosses the plate. Runner from first misses second base but tries for third. The catcher's throw to third base gets past the third baseman, and runner tries to score. The shortstop, backing up third, attempts to throw the runner out at the plate, but the catcher's tag is too late, and the runner is ruled safe. Can the defensive team still appeal at second

base on the runner originally on first?

**Ruling 3:** Yes. The defensive team's attempted plays on the runner originally on first at third and home were still part of the continuous action created by and following the wild pitched ball. Therefore, the defensive team does not lose its right to make its appeal by attempting these plays and may still appeal on the runner originally on first at second base.

**Play 4:** Runner on first, one out. The batter singles. Runner from first misses second base and advances to third without a play. The ball comes into the infield and is returned to the pitcher. The pitcher stretches, comes to a set position and then legally steps off the rubber to start an appeal at second base. The original runner from first (now on third) breaks for home as the defense starts its appeal. The pitcher, instead of completing his appeal play, throws home to get the runner, but the tag is too late, and he is ruled safe. Can the defensive team still appeal at second base?

**Ruling 4:** No. The defensive team's attempt to retire the original runner at home occurred after a definite break in the original continuous action that was created by and followed the batted ball. Therefore, the defensive team lost its right to make any appeals once it made the play at home and may not appeal.

**Play 5:** Runner on first, one out. Runner from first goes to third on a single but misses second base. Runner is safe at third on a sliding tag play. The ball is returned to the pitcher, who steps on the rubber, stretches and comes to a set position. The defense intends to appeal, but the pitcher balks as he steps off the rubber. After the penalty is enforced, can the defense still appeal at second base on the original runner from first?

**Ruling 5:** No. The defense did not lose its right to appeal by playing on the runner originally on first at third base; that play was still part of the continuous action created by and following the batted ball. However, a balk is considered a play for the purpose of this section of the appeal rule. Since the defensive team cannot appeal following a play or attempted play, the pitcher's balk cost the defensive team its right to make an appeal.

**Play 6:** Runner on second, one out. Runner from second attempts to score on a single but misses third base. Runner is safe at home on a sliding tag play. On the throw home, the batter-runner tries to take second and is safe there on a sliding tag play, as the catcher's throw is too late to retire him. Time is called. The pitcher steps on the rubber, stretches and comes to a set position. The defense intends to appeal at third on the runner originally on second. The pitcher legally steps back off the rubber, checks the runner at second base and steps to throw to third for the appeal. The pitcher's throw, however, is wild and goes into dead territory beyond the third baseman. The runner on second is properly awarded home. Can the defense still make its intended appeal at third on the runner originally on second when a new ball is put into play?

**Ruling 6:** No. The attempted plays to retire the runner originally on second at home and the batter-runner at second occurred during the continuous action which was created by and followed the batted ball and do not nullify the defensive team's right to make an appeal. However, once the defensive team "errs" (i.e., throws the ball out of play) in its attempt to appeal at third on the runner originally on second, it loses its right to make an appeal. Throwing the ball out of play in this situation is considered



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an attempted play which occurred after a definite break in the continuous action play.

**Play 7:** No runners. The batter doubles but misses first base. Time is called. The pitcher steps on the rubber, stretches and comes to a set position. The defense intends to appeal at first base. The pitcher legally steps off the rubber and checks the runner at second base. The pitcher's throw for the appeal gets past the first baseman but remains in play. The runner advances to third as the ball is being retrieved. Can the defensive team still make its intended appeal at first base?

**Ruling 7:** Yes. Since the ball is live and in play, if the ball is retrieved and thrown back to first base immediately, the appeal is allowed.

**Play 8:** Runner on first, one out. The batter singles. Runner on first misses second base but is safe at third on a sliding tag play. Time is called. The pitcher steps on the rubber, stretches and comes to a set position. The defense intends to appeal at second base. The pitcher legally steps off the rubber. Seeing this, the runner originally on first (now on third) bluffs as if to go home. The pitcher, now off the rubber, steps toward third and cocks his arm as if to throw but does not throw. Can the defensive team still make its intended appeal at second base on the runner originally on first?

**Ruling 8:** Yes. The attempted play at third on the runner originally on first was still part of the continuous action created by and following the batted ball and therefore did not nullify the defensive team's right to make an appeal. The bluff by the pitcher (step and cocked arm) to check the runner at third is not considered a play or attempted play. Therefore, the defensive team may still attempt its intended appeal at second base.

**Play 9:** Runner on first, one out. Batter hits homerun out of ballpark. Runner from first misses second and batter-runner misses first. After both runners cross the plate, the umpire puts new ball in play. Pitcher takes his position on the rubber, steps off and intends to make an appeal at first base on the batter-runner. However, his throw is wild and goes into the stands. The umpire then puts another ball into play, and the pitcher again takes his position on the rubber and steps off. This time he intends to make an appeal at second base on the runner originally on first. Should the umpire allow the appeal?

**Ruling 9:** No. If the pitcher throws the ball out of play when making an appeal, such act shall be considered an attempted play. No further appeal will be allowed on any runner at any base.

**Play 10:** Runners on first and third, one out. Runner from first is stealing on the pitch. Batter hits a fly ball to right field which is caught for the second out. Runner on third tags and scores after the catch. Runner from first tries to return to first base after the catch, but the right fielder's throw beats him to the bag and he is declared out for the third out of the inning. Runner from third base touched home plate before the third out was made at first base.

**Ruling 10:** Run counts. **This is a time play, NOT a force play.**

**Play 11:** May a runner who has missed a base return to retouch the missed base

after having entered the dugout?

**Ruling 11:** No.

**Play 12:** May a runner return to touch a missed base after the third out?

**Ruling 12:** No. Example: Runner on second base, two out. Batter hits a base hit but is thrown out attempting to reach second base. Runner originally on second crossed the plate before the third out but missed the plate. After the third out at second base, the runner who missed the plate then returns and touches the plate. Defense, before leaving the infield, then appeals at home. Ruling: Initially the run scores (runner reached home plate before the third out). However, the defense's appeal is sustained and the runner is called out because no run may score after the third out is made. (See Official Baseball Rule 4.09(a).)

**Play 13:** Batter-runner hits a ground ball and beats the play at first base but misses the bag.

**Ruling 13:** The proper mechanic is to call the batter-runner "Safe," indicating he beat the play. If the defense appeals by tagging the runner (or base) and appealing that the runner missed first base before the runner returns to first base, the batter-runner would be declared out. (See Official Baseball Rule 7.08(k) Casebook Comment.)

**Play 14:** Runner on first, no outs, hit-and-run. Batter hits a line drive which strikes the pitcher in the back, flies into the air and is caught by the third baseman for an out. The runner on first is nearly to second base when the ball is caught. The third baseman throws to first, attempting to double the runner off first base; however, his throw is wild and goes into the stands. At the time of the throw, the runner from first has not quite reached second base. When the ball goes out of play, the runner from first has rounded second base (touching second as he rounded it) and is several steps towards shortstop.

a) What is the proper award?

**Ruling:** Third base - two bases from the time of the pitch because this is the first play by an infielder.

b) What if the runner is beyond second base at the time of the throw? Is the award then home?

**Ruling:** No, the award is still third because the throw was the first play by an infielder. **NOTE:** See Section 6.11, "Award Made from Original Base after Catch," for situations when a runner is initially awarded two bases from his position at the time of the throw, after which he is subsequently awarded two bases from his original base.

c) In the original play may the runner go back and retouch first base while the ball is dead?

**Ruling:** Yes, provided he does so before touching third base (and provided he touches all bases in order, both returning and advancing). (See Official Baseball Rule 7.10(b) Approved Ruling (2); also see Section 6.12, "Retouching Bases When Ball is

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Dead.”) **This is a key point.** Because the runner left first base too soon, he must return and retouch first base before he touches the next base. The runner’s “next base” is determined by his position at the time the ball went out of play. At the time the ball went out of play, the runner was between second and third. Therefore, in this play, the runner must return and retouch first base before touching third.

d) May the runner return to first base to retouch after he touches third base?

**Ruling:** No. (See preceding question and ruling.)

e) What if the runner attempts to return to first base after he touches third base? Should the umpire stop him from doing so?

**Ruling:** No. The umpire should not intervene in any way other than to realize that after the runner has touched third, his retouch of first is meaningless. After touching third base, if the runner should attempt to retrace his steps while the ball is dead (from third, back to second, back to first, then to second, and finally to third), the umpire would not physically stop the runner from doing so. However, the runner’s retouch of first base would not correct the fact he left too soon because when the ball is dead, the runner must correct his base running error before he touches the next base. (Again, see Official Baseball Rule 7.10(b) Approved Ruling (2) and Section 6.12, “Retouching Bases When Ball is Dead.”)

f) In this play, when the ball went out of play, the runner was already past second. Isn’t the runner already a “base beyond” the base he left too soon? And therefore, the runner should not be able to return to first base because he has already reached second base, correct?

**Ruling:** No, the “base beyond” or “next base” is determined by the runner’s position at the time the ball goes out of play. (See Section 6.12, “Retouching Bases When Ball is Dead.”) In this play, the runner’s “next base” is third base.

g) In this play, how can the runner correct the fact he left too soon?

**Ruling:** When the ball is dead (out of play), the runner should stop advancing towards third and retrace his steps in order, touching second and then first (all before touching third base). He should then advance to third (his awarded base) by touching second and then third, in order.

h) If the runner goes directly to third base on the award (and does not retouch first base while the ball is dead), may the defense appeal the fact the runner left too soon at first?

**Ruling:** Yes, after the ball is put back in play, the defense may appeal by tagging the runner or first base. (See Official Baseball Rule 7.10(a).)

i) After the ball is back in play, may the defense put the runner out by appealing at second base?

**Ruling:** No. The runner may be put out only by tagging him or the base he left

too soon. (See Official Baseball Rule 7.10(a); also see Section 6.13, “Defense Must Appeal Original Base After Catch.”)

j) Doesn’t the act of the third baseman throwing the ball out of play nullify a succeeding appeal attempt? That is, hasn’t the defense erred on its first attempt to appeal?

**Ruling:** No. The wild throw by the third baseman is part of the continuous action created by the batter hitting the ball and does not nullify a subsequent appeal after the continuous action has ended.

k) Suppose the defense does appeal at second base, and the umpire declares the runner safe (after ascertaining what the defense is appealing). May the defense then appeal at first base?

**Ruling:** Yes, because an appeal itself is not considered a play or attempted play. (See Section 6.2, “Appeal Plays.”)

l) What if the defense appeals at first base, but the pitcher balks in making the appeal?

**Ruling:** No appeal would be allowed, as this is considered a play.

m) What if the defense appeals at first base, but the pitcher throws the ball into the stands?

**Ruling:** No subsequent appeal would be allowed, as this is considered an attempted play.

n) Can the second baseman back up the appeal play at first base?

**Ruling:** While the second baseman may run onto foul territory after the ball is put into play, the umpire may not put the ball in play until all fielders (other than the catcher) are on fair territory. (See Official Baseball Rule 4.03 and Section 6.12, “Retouching Bases When Ball is Dead.”)

o) What if the defense appeals at first base, but the pitcher throws wildly and the ball rolls down the right-field line?

**Ruling:** If the wild throw is retrieved and thrown back to first base immediately (i.e., no intervening play), the appeal would be allowed.

p) To begin the appeal, the pitcher steps off the rubber, then fakes a throw to third to bluff the runner back. Is this an attempted play?

**Ruling:** No.

q) When the pitcher steps off the rubber to start the appeal, the runner breaks for home. Pitcher throws to the catcher, and the runner gets in a rundown, ending up safely at third base. May the defense now appeal at first?

**Ruling:** No.

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In addition to the preceding approved rulings regarding appeal plays, the examples and plays found in the Casebook Comments to Official Baseball Rule 4.09 also pertain to appeal plays. In particular, plays found in that section of the Official Baseball Rules demonstrate the following three concepts:

1. No run shall score during a play in which the third out is made by the batter-runner before he touches first base.
2. No run shall score during a play in which the third out is a force out.
3. Following runners are not affected by an act of a preceding runner unless two are out.

## **6.5 FIELDER FALLING INTO DUGOUT OR STANDS**

The Casebook Comment to Official Baseball Rule 6.05(a) stipulates that no fielder may step or go into a dugout to make a catch. However, if a fielder, after catching a fly ball on the playing surface or at any point while in complete possession of the ball (pitched, thrown or fair batted ball not in flight), falls down in the dugout or falls into a dugout, bench, grandstand or any out-of-play area, the ball shall be dead and base runners shall be entitled to advance one base from the time the fielder fell into, or in such out-of-play area.

In order to make a legal catch, the fielder must have one or both feet on or over the playing surface (including the lip of the dugout) and neither foot on the ground inside the dugout or other out-of-play surface.

A fielder is considered to be in the dugout - and thereby unable to make a valid catch - when he has one or both feet on the surface inside the dugout (for example, on the steps or on the floor of the dugout) or has dived into the dugout with neither foot on or above the playing surface. The lip of a dugout (i.e., the top of the dugout steps that is even with the playing surface, even if it is a different material than the playing surface) is considered outside the dugout for purposes of this rule.

As an example, a player who catches a pop-up with one foot on the lip and the other foot on a step inside the dugout would be deemed to be inside the dugout, and no catch would be allowed. On the other hand, a player who catches a pop-up with one foot on the lip and the other foot in the air over a step or over the dugout floor would not be deemed to be inside the dugout, because in that example one foot is on the playing surface and neither foot is on the ground inside the dugout.

**NOTE:** A ball striking **equipment on the lip** of the dugout is dead. Clubs should make best efforts to keep all equipment off the top step (lip) of the dugout.

### **EXAMPLES:**

**Play 1:** Catcher catches a foul pop-up on the field of play, and momentum carries him into the dugout. While in the dugout the catcher drops the ball in attempting to throw it.

**Ruling 1:** Legal catch. "Time" is called and all runners awarded two bases from the time the catcher dropped the ball (time of throw).

**Play 2:** Catcher catches a foul pop-up on the field of play, and momentum carries him into the dugout. While in the dugout he falls down.

**Ruling 2:** Legal catch. “Time” is called and all runners awarded one base from the time the fielder fell in the dugout.

**Play 3:** Catcher catches a foul pop-up on the field of play, and momentum carries him into the dugout. While in the dugout the catcher falls down, then drops the ball.

**Ruling 3:** Foul ball.

**Play 4:** Catcher makes a diving catch and slides into dugout after catching the ball. The catcher ends up on the floor of the dugout, face-down, with possession of the ball.

**Ruling 4:** Legal catch. “Time” is called and all runners awarded one base from the time the fielder fell into the dugout.

**Play 5:** Bases loaded, one out. Fielder catches ball and momentum carries him into the stands. May the fielder throw for a play?

**Ruling 5:** No. “Time” is called and all runners advance one base.

### 6.6 AWARDING BASES ON WILD THROWS

See Official Baseball Rule 7.05(g) regarding awarding of bases on balls that are thrown out of play. In making such awards, keep the following points in mind:

1. If throw is first play by infielder and batter-runner has **not** reached first base when throw was made, award all runners from **time of pitch**.
2. If throw is first play by infielder **and** all runners, including the batter-runner, have advanced a base when throw was made; award all runners from **time of throw**.
3. If throw is **not** first play by infielder or the throw is made by outfielder, award all runners from **time of throw**.

The Approved Ruling of Official Baseball Rule 7.05(g) provides that when the first throw is by an infielder **after** runners and batter have advanced one base then runners are awarded two bases from their position when the throw was made. (See Item 2 above.) This can happen on a high fly that an infielder goes back to catch but drops the ball during which time the batter and runners have clearly advanced one base; then in an attempt to put out the batter-runner after he has passed first base, he throws the ball into the stands. While it is the first throw by an infielder, the runners, including the batter-runner, had advanced one base before the throw and accordingly are awarded two bases from the base they last touched when the throw was made. Before awarding two bases from the base last touched by the runners, the umpire must judge that all the runners have definitely advanced to the next base before the throw was made.

The term “when the wild throw was made” means when the throw actually left the player’s hand and not when the thrown ball hit the ground, passes a receiving fielder, or goes out of play into the stands. When a runner is awarded bases without liability to be put out because the ball has gone out of play, he is not relieved of his responsibility to touch the base he is awarded and all intervening bases. (See Section 6.12, “Retouching Bases When Ball is Dead.”)

In awarding of bases, crews should have the benefit of input of their partners. If there is any question as to the proper award, it is required that the umpires confer as a crew.

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## 6.7 TIME OF PITCH

The time of pitch is defined as the moment the pitcher's movements commit him to deliver the ball to the batter.

- In a **windup position**, this is defined as the moment the pitcher begins the natural movement associated with his delivery of the ball to the batter (i.e., the start of his windup or delivery).

- From a **set position**, this is defined as the moment the pitcher begins the natural movement associated with his delivery of the ball to the batter **after** the pitcher has come set with both hands together in front of his body.

A runner who advances while the pitcher is in contact with the rubber is considered to occupy the base last touched at the time the pitcher initiates his actual pitching motion to the batter. The pitching motion is defined as any movement which commits the pitcher to deliver the ball to the batter.

As long as the pitcher is not committed to pitch, a runner may advance and is considered to occupy the last base touched at the time the pitcher initiates his actual delivery to the batter.

The preliminary motion known as the "stretch" is not considered the start of the pitching motion.

## 6.8 BALLS DEFLECTED OUT OF PLAY

The Approved Ruling of Official Baseball Rule 7.05(h) provides that when a **pitched ball** deflects off the catcher and goes **directly** out of play, the award is one base from the time of the pitch. Likewise, when a throw from the pitcher while in contact with the rubber deflects off a fielder and goes **directly** out of play, the award is also one base.

However, the Approved Ruling also provides that if the **pitched ball** (or ball thrown by the pitcher while in contact with the rubber) goes through or by the catcher (or fielder), remains on the playing field, and is **subsequently kicked or deflected out of play**, the award is **two bases** from the **time of the pitch**.

The above rulings apply if the deflection is unintentional on the part of the fielder. If, in the judgment of the umpires, a fielder **intentionally** kicks or deflects any batted or thrown ball out of play, the award is **two bases** from the **time the ball was kicked or deflected**.

The following list helps summarize awards when a ball is deflected out of play:

- If a pitched ball deflects off the catcher and goes **directly** out of play, the award is **one base from the time of the pitch**.

- If a ball thrown by the pitcher while in contact with the rubber deflects off a fielder and goes **directly** out of play, the award is **one base from the time of the throw**.

- If a pitched ball (or a ball thrown by the pitcher while in contact with the rubber) goes through or by the catcher (or fielder), remains on the playing field and is **subsequently kicked or deflected** out of play (unintentionally in either case), the award is **two bases from the time of the pitch**. *This ruling applies without regard to whether or not the ball would have gone out of play had it not been kicked or deflected.* (See the Approved Ruling to Official Baseball Rule 7.05(h).)

### EXAMPLES:

**Play 1:** With runners on base, a pitched ball deflects off the catcher and rolls into the dugout.

**Ruling 1:** One base from the time of the pitch.

**Play 2:** With runners on base, a wild pitch goes past the catcher and strikes the backstop. The ball rebounds and rolls towards an out-of-play line. It is obvious that the ball will roll out of play on its own. The catcher, chasing after the ball, dives and tries to stop the ball from going out of play. The ball deflects off the catcher's outstretched gloved hand and rolls out of play anyway.

**Ruling 2:** Two bases from the time of the pitch.

- If a thrown ball deflects off a fielder and goes **directly** out of play, the award is two bases from the time of the pitch if it is the first play by an infielder; otherwise the award is two bases from the time of the throw. (See Section 6.6, "Awarding Bases on Wild Throws.")
- If a thrown ball goes through or by a fielder and remains on the playing field and is **subsequently kicked or deflected out of play** (unintentionally in either case), the award is two bases from the time of the throw.
- If a fair fly ball is deflected in flight by a fielder and then goes out of the playing field in flight over fair territory, it is a homerun.
- If a fair fly ball is deflected in flight by a fielder and then goes out of play outside the foul lines, the award is two bases from the time of the pitch.
- If a fair ball not in flight is deflected by a fielder and then goes out of play, the award is two bases from the time of the pitch.
- If a fielder has **complete possession** of a batted or thrown ball and subsequently deflects or kicks the ball out of play, the award is two bases from the position of the runners at the time the ball was kicked or deflected.
- If a fielder has **complete possession** of a batted or thrown ball and drops the ball while he is out of play, or if he drops such a ball and it then goes out of play, the award is two bases from the position of the runners at the time the ball was dropped.
- If, in the judgment of the umpires, a fielder **intentionally kicks or deflects** a batted or thrown ball out of play, the award is **two bases** from the **time the ball was kicked or deflected**.

### 6.9 DETACHED EQUIPMENT TOUCHING PITCHED OR BATTED BALL

Any defensive player deliberately touching a **pitched ball** with detached equipment (such as a catcher's mask, cap, etc.) will entitle all runners to advance **one base** from the time the ball was touched without liability to be put out. The ball is in play, and runners may advance beyond the awarded base at their own risk.

Any defensive player deliberately touching a **batted ball over fair territory** with detached equipment will entitle all runners - including the batter-runner - to advance



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**three bases** from the time the ball was touched without liability to be put out. The ball is in play, and runners may advance beyond the awarded base at their own risk.

Any defensive player deliberately touching a **batted ball over foul territory** that, in the umpire's judgment, *has an opportunity to become a fair ball* with detached equipment will entitle all runners - including the batter-runner - to advance **three bases** from the time the ball was touched without liability to be put out. The ball is in play, and runners may advance beyond the awarded base at their own risk.

If a defensive player deliberately touches a batted ball over foul territory that, in the umpire's judgment, clearly has no opportunity to become a fair ball, the umpire shall rule a foul ball. (See Official Baseball Rule 7.05(c).)

## **6.10 BALL GOING INTO PLAYER'S UNIFORM**

If a batted or thrown ball inadvertently goes inside a player's or coach's uniform (or lodges in the catcher's face mask or paraphernalia), the umpire shall call "Time." He will, using common sense and fair play, place all runners in such a manner that will nullify the action of the ball going out of play. **Any outs recorded prior to the ball going into the player's or coach's uniform (or lodges in the catcher's face mask or paraphernalia) will stand.**

Note that this interpretation does not apply to situations where a batted ball or thrown ball lodges in a fielder's glove. In those cases, the ball is alive and in play. A fielder may legally throw the glove with the live ball lodged in the glove. Any fielder in possession of the glove containing the lodged ball is considered in possession of the ball for the purpose of the rules. For example, a fielder could legally tag a runner or a base while in possession of the glove containing the lodged ball.

### **EXAMPLES:**

**Play 1:** With the bases loaded and one out, the batter hits a routine ground ball to the first baseman. The ball is not fielded cleanly and it rolls up the arm and into the uniform shirt of the first baseman. He attempts to dig it out, but can't immediately. By the time he does gain possession of the ball, all runners, including the batter-runner, have advanced one base. What is the correct ruling?

**Ruling 1:** "Time" is called immediately when the ball rolls into the uniform shirt. All runners awarded one base.

**Play 2:** With the bases loaded and one out, the batter hits a ball to the shortstop who fields the ball cleanly and flips to second base, retiring the runner from first. The quick throw to first base bounces well ahead of the batter-runner and rolls up the arm and into the uniform shirt of the first baseman. He attempts to dig it out, but can't immediately. By the time he gains possession of the ball, all other runners, including the batter-runner, have advanced and are standing on their next base. What is the correct ruling?

**Ruling 2:** "Time" is called. Runner on third is awarded home. Runner on second is awarded third base. Runner on first is declared "Out" at second base. The batter-runner is awarded first base.

### **6.11 AWARD MADE FROM ORIGINAL BASE AFTER CATCH**

If a runner is forced to return to a base after a catch, he must retouch his original base even though, because of some ground rule or other rule, he is awarded additional bases. He may retouch while the ball is dead (**provided** the runner does so before reaching the next base - see Section 6.12, "Retouching Bases When Ball is Dead"), and the award is made from his original base. (See Casebook Comments following Official Baseball Rule 7.05(i).)

#### **EXAMPLES:**

**Play 1:** Runner on first, one out. Hit and run. Batter hits a line drive to the shortstop, who catches the ball for the second out. Shortstop's throw to first is wild and goes into the stands. Runner originally on first is between first and second when wild throw is made.

**Ruling 1:** Runner originally on first is awarded third. However, while the ball is dead, he must return to and retouch first base before he touches second on his way to third. If he touches second he may not return to first, and if the defensive team appeals he is declared out at first.

**Play 2:** Runner on first, one out. Batter flies out to right field for second out. However, runner on first thought there were two out and is between second and third when the ball is caught. Right fielder's throw to first is wild and goes into dugout. Runner is between second and third when ball goes out of play.

**Ruling 2:** Runner is awarded home (two bases from his position at the time of the throw). However, while the ball is dead, he must return to and retouch first base. Furthermore, since he was between second and third when the ball went out of play, he must return to first before he reaches and touches **third** (the next base). If he touches third, he may not return to first; and if the defensive team appeals, he is out at first. However, if the runner properly returns and retouches first before reaching third, the award then becomes third base (two bases from his original base).

### **6.12 RETOUCHING BASES WHEN BALL IS DEAD**

When the ball is dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base or one he has left too soon after he has advanced to and touched a base beyond the missed base. A runner may return to a missed base (or one he has left too soon) when the ball is dead if he has not touched the next base. A runner may, of course, return to any missed base (or one he has left too soon) while the ball is in play unless a following runner has scored. See Approved Rulings (1) and (2) to Official Baseball Rule 7.10(b).

The "**next base**" or "**base beyond**" in this section refers to the position of the runner at the time the ball went out of play.

#### **EXAMPLES:**

**Play 1:** Batter hits ball out of park or ground rule double and misses first base (ball is dead).

**Ruling 1:** He may return to first base to correct his mistake before he touches second; but if he touches second, he may not return to first; and if the defensive team appeals, he is declared out at first.

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**Play 2:** Batter hits ball to the shortstop who throws wild into stands (ball is dead). Batter-runner misses first base but is awarded second base on the overthrow.

**Ruling 2:** Even though the umpire has awarded the runner second base on the overthrow, the runner must return to touch first base before he touches second base.

**Play 3:** Batter hits single to right field and misses first base in rounding it. Right fielder makes a quick throw to the first baseman in an attempt to pickoff the batter-runner before he can return to first base. However, his throw is wild and goes into dugout.

**Ruling 3:** Batter-runner is awarded third base. However, he must return to and touch first base before he touches second. While the ball is dead, he may return to first base to correct his mistake before he touches second; but if he touches second he may not return to first, and if the defensive team appeals, he is declared out at first.

**Play 4:** Runner on second base, no outs. Batter hits a fly ball to right field that is caught for the first out. Runner at second base leaves too soon. Runner slides into third base safely, but the right fielder's throw goes into the dugout.

**Ruling 4:** Runner is awarded home. However, while the ball is dead the runner must return to and retouch second base. Furthermore, because he had already reached third base before the ball went out of play, the runner must return to second base before touching home (his next base). If the runner touches home, he may not return to second, and if the defense appeals, he is declared out at second.

**Play 5:** Runners on first and second, one out. Batter hits a deep fly ball that is caught by the right fielder. The runner from second is running when the ball is hit, does not tag up, and proceeds to touch and round third base. After the runner from second has rounded third base, the right fielder throws behind the runner from first, who is returning to first base. The fielder's throw is wild and goes out of play. The umpires call "Time" and award the runners home and third. When the umpires call "Time" the runner from second is between third and home, and the runner from first is between first and second. At this point manager yells to the runner from second (who is between third and home) to go back and tag up at second base. Is this permissible, or is the runner considered a "base beyond" the base he left too soon?

**Ruling 5:** It is permissible for the runner to return to second base while the ball is dead. When the ball went out of play the runner originally on second base was past third (between third and home). The runner's "next base" is therefore home. While the ball is dead he may return to second base and retouch at any time prior to touching home plate. However, if the runner advances to and touches home while the ball is dead, he may **not** return.

**Play 6:** Runner on first, one out. Hit-and-run. Batter hits a line drive to the shortstop, who catches the ball for the second out. Shortstop's throw to first is wild and goes into the stands. Runner originally on first is between first and second when the wild throw is made and goes out of play.

**Ruling 6:** Runner is awarded third. However, while the ball is dead, the runner must return to and retouch first base before touching second on the way to third. If the

runner touches second, he may not return to first, and if the defensive team appeals, he is declared out at first.

**Play 7:** Runner on first, hit-and-run. Batter hits a fly ball to left field that is caught. The runner touches second in advancing but misses second on the way back to first. The throw back to first base is wild and goes into the stands. When the wild throw was made the runner was between first and second.

**Ruling 7:** Runner is awarded third base. If the runner retouches first and then second in advancing to the awarded base, his failure to touch second in returning to first is “corrected” under the theory that touching the base the “last time by” corrects any previous error.

### **6.13 DEFENSE MUST APPEAL ORIGINAL BASE AFTER CATCH**

When a runner misses a base and a fielder holds the ball on the missed base, or on the base **originally occupied** by the runner if a fly ball is caught, and appeals for the umpire’s decision, the runner is out when the umpire sustains the appeal. (See next-to-last Casebook Comment to Official Baseball Rule 4.09.)

**Play 1:** Runner on first, batter hits the ball far into the outfield and runner races for third. Catch is made, and outfielder throws ball to shortstop who steps on second base asking umpire to rule an out.

**Ruling 1:** This is an improper play by the shortstop, as the runner may be called out only by being tagged or first base being touched before the runner reaches first base.

### **6.14 RUNNER FORCED HOME ALLOWED TO SCORE AFTER THIRD OUT**

A runner forced to advance without liability to be put out may advance past the base to which he is entitled only at his peril. If such a runner, forced to advance, is put out for the third out before a preceding runner, also forced to advance, touches home plate, the run shall score. (See Casebook Comments to Official Baseball Rule 7.04(b).)

**Play 1:** Two out, bases loaded, batter walks, but runner from second is overzealous and runs past third base toward home and is tagged out on a throw by the catcher.

**Ruling 1:** Even though two are out, the run would score on the theory that the run was forced home by the base on balls and that all the runners needed to do was proceed and touch the next base.

### **6.15 ABANDONING BASE PATHS**

Under Official Baseball Rule 7.08(a), any runner who after reaching first base leaves the baseline heading for his dugout or his position believing that there is no further play, may be declared out if the umpire judges the act of the runner as abandoning his effort to run the bases. Even though an out is called, the ball remains in play in regard to any other runner.

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This rule also covers the following and similar plays:

**Play 1:** Less than two out, runner on first, score tied in the last of the ninth inning. Batter hits a homerun out of the ballpark to win the game. However, the runner on first touches second and, thinking the homerun automatically wins the game, cuts across the diamond toward the dugout as the batter-runner circles the bases.

**Ruling 1:** In this case, the runner would be called out “for abandoning his effort to touch the next base” and the batter-runner permitted to continue around the bases to make the homerun valid. If there were two out the homerun would not count. **This is not an appeal play.** (See Official Baseball Rule 7.12.)

**Play 2:** A runner, believing he is called out on a tag at first or third base, starts for the dugout and progresses a reasonable distance, still indicating by his actions that he is out.

**Ruling 2:** The runner shall be declared out for abandoning the bases.

Under the Casebook Comment to Official Baseball Rule 6.09(b), a batter **who strikes out on a third strike not caught is treated differently** than the above two plays relating to abandoning the base paths:

A batter who does not realize his situation on a third strike not caught, and who is not in the process of running to first base, **shall be declared out once he leaves the dirt circle surrounding home plate.**

The above ruling shall also apply to a batter who strikes out on a third strike not caught and who makes no effort to advance to first base within, in the umpire’s judgment, a reasonable amount of time. For example, a batter who “lingers” at home plate, removing his shin guard, and then takes off for first base shall also be declared out.

Due to the variation in size and shape of dirt circles surrounding home plate in different ballparks, in the umpire’s judgment when the batter-runner has shown no effort to advance to first base on a third strike not caught such batter may be declared out. In any case, should the batter leave the dirt circle surrounding home plate before attempting to advance to first base, the batter shall be declared out.

Umpires must be alert to time-play situations when a runner abandons his effort to touch the next base, as demonstrated in the following play:

**Play 3:** Bases loaded, two out, score tied in the bottom of the ninth inning. Batter hits a homerun out of the ballpark. Runner on first, thinking the homerun automatically wins the game, leaves the baseline after reaching second base and heads toward the dugout. The runner on first is declared out before the runner from third reaches home plate. Other runners continue around the bases and eventually touch home.

**Ruling 3:** No runs score; the third out was made before the runner from third touched home plate. Game continues in the top of the tenth inning with the score still tied. **NOTE:** If there were less than two out, the game would end the moment the winning run touched home plate. (See Official Baseball Rule 4.09(b) and 4.11(c).)

## **6.16 PASSING A PRECEDING RUNNER**

Any runner is out when he passes a preceding runner before such runner is out.

**Play 1:** Bases loaded, two out. Batter hits homerun out of ballpark but passes runner on first before runner on third reaches the plate. All runners continue around the bases and touch home.

**Ruling 1:** No runs score. This is a time play. (Note clarification to Official Baseball Rule 4.11(c) Approved Ruling.)

### 6.17 PUTTING BALL IN PLAY AFTER BALL IS DEAD

After the ball is dead, the plate umpire shall resume play by calling “Play” (pointing to the pitcher) as soon as the pitcher takes his place on the rubber with the ball in his possession and the batter has taken his position in the batter’s box.

### 6.18 RUNNERS ADVANCING ON BALL FOUR

Official Baseball Rule 6.08(a) states that after four balls the batter is entitled to first base without liability to be put out. However, a runner is required to touch all bases in order.

Accordingly, a batter who is entitled to first base because of a base on balls must go to first base and touch the base before other runners are forced to advance. This applies when bases are full and applies when a substitute runner is put into the game.

Official Baseball Rule 6.08 entitles the batter (who becomes a runner because four balls have been called) to first base without liability to be put out provided the batter **advances and touches first base**. The same reasoning applies to a runner who is forced to advance because of a base on balls to the batter. If, in so advancing, the runner thinks there is a play and slides past the base **before or after** touching it, he may be put out by the fielder **tagging him**. If the runner fails to touch the base to which he is entitled and attempts to advance **beyond** that base, the defense may put the runner out by tagging **him or the base** the runner missed, as provided in the Note to Official Baseball Rule 7.04(d).

**NOTE:** The batter-runner is not prohibited from overrunning first base on a base on balls (i.e., the batter-runner may overrun first base on a base on balls and is not in jeopardy of being put out **provided** he returns immediately to first base).

(See Official Baseball Rules 7.08(c)(EXCEPTION), 7.08(j), and 7.10(c).)

# **SECTION 7**

## **INTERFERENCE AND OBSTRUCTION**

### **7.1 OFFENSIVE INTERFERENCE**

Offensive interference is an act by the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. More specifically, if a runner fails to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field a batted ball or if a runner hinders a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball, the runner shall be called out for interference.

Note that under the Official Baseball Rules, a fielder is protected while he is in the act of fielding a batted ball. In addition, note that a fielder is also protected while he is in the act of making a play after he has fielded a batted ball. If a runner hinders or impedes a fielder after he has fielded a batted ball but before he is able to throw the ball, the runner shall be called out for interference. Furthermore, a runner who is adjudged to have hindered a fielder who is attempting to make a play on a batted ball is out whether it was intentional or not.

While contact may occur between a fielder and runner during a tag attempt, a runner is not allowed to use his hands or arms to commit an obviously malicious or unsportsmanlike act - such as grabbing, tackling, intentionally slapping at the baseball, punching, kicking, flagrantly using his arms or forearms, etc. - to commit an intentional act of interference unrelated to running the bases. Further, if in the judgment of the umpire such intentional act was to prevent a double play, the umpire would rule the batter-runner out as well. Depending on the severity of the infraction, it is possible the player may be ejected for such conduct.

Under the Official Baseball Rules, if a runner or batter-runner comes in contact with one or more fielders while they are attempting to field a batted ball, the umpire shall determine which fielder is entitled to the benefit of this rule and shall not declare the runner out for coming in contact with a fielder other than the one the umpire determines to be entitled to field such batted ball. See Official Baseball Rule 7.09(j). See also Approved Ruling (7) in Section 6.23.

If the umpire declares the batter, batter-runner or a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was, in the judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference unless otherwise provided by the Official Baseball Rules.

#### **EXAMPLES:**

**Play 1:** In a rundown between third base and home plate, the runner from second base has advanced to and is standing on third base when the runner in the rundown is called out for offensive interference.

**Ruling 1:** The umpire shall send the runner standing on third base back to second

base. The reasoning is that third base legally belongs to the runner in the rundown. The following runner has not legally reached third base at the time of interference and must therefore return to second base.

**Play 2:** In a rundown between third base and home plate, the runner from first base has advanced to and is standing on second base when the runner in the rundown is called out for offensive interference.

**Ruling 2:** The umpire shall allow the runner to remain at second base. The reasoning is that on interference, all runners return to the last legally touched base at the time of interference.

### 7.2 INTERFERENCE WITH INTERVENING PLAY

**Play 1:** Play at the plate on runner attempting to score; runner is called safe. A following play is made on the batter-runner, and he is called out for interference outside the three-foot lane.

**Ruling 1:** With less than two out, the run scores and batter-runner is out. With two out, the run does **not** count. The reasoning is that an intervening play occurred before the interference. Runners would return to the base last legally touched at the time of interference. However, with two out, the runner reached home on a play in which the batter-runner was out before he reached first base. (Note this clarification to Official Baseball Rule 2.00 - Interference (a) Comment.)

### 7.3 WILLFUL AND DELIBERATE INTERFERENCE

Official Baseball Rule 7.09(f) and (g) were inserted to add an additional penalty when a base runner or a batter-runner deliberately and intentionally interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball to deprive the defensive team of an opportunity to complete a possible double play. Keep in mind the rules provide that the runner or a batter-runner must interfere with the **obvious attempt to break up a double play**. A runner from third willfully running into the catcher fielding a pop fly ball, or a runner on second base deliberately running into a ground ball or allowing the ball to hit him to prevent a double play are examples that require the call of a double play under these rules.

Official Baseball Rule 6.05(m) was inserted “to penalize the offensive team for deliberate, unwarranted, unsportsmanlike action by the runner in leaving the baseline for the obvious purpose of crashing the pivot man on a double play, rather than trying to reach the base.” Note the following official interpretation:

If, in the judgment of the umpire, a runner **willfully and deliberately interferes** with a fielder attempting to catch a thrown ball or attempting to throw a ball with the **obvious intent to deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play**, the umpire shall declare the runner out for interference and shall also declare the batter-runner out for the interference of his teammate.

#### Guidelines:

In sliding to a base, the runner should be able to reach the base with his hand or foot.



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A runner who, in the judgment of the umpire, contacts or attempts to make contact with a fielder with a slide or roll block that is not a bona fide effort to reach and stay on the base may be called out for interference and, when appropriate, a double play may be called.

Any definite change in direction by the runner to contact the fielder would be considered interference.

If a runner hits the dirt, slides, and rolls, it does not constitute a rolling block unless the runner leaves his feet and makes contact with the fielder before the runner slides on the ground. If the initial contact is with a fielder instead of the ground for the purpose of breaking up a double play, it is a roll block.

### **EXAMPLES:**

**Play 1:** Bases loaded, no outs, ground ball to the shortstop. Anticipating a double play, runner from second intentionally crashes into the shortstop and grabs him just as the shortstop is beginning his throw to second.

**Ruling 1:** Runner from second is guilty of willfully and deliberately interfering with a fielder with the obvious intent to deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play. Runner from second is declared out and so is the batter-runner. Runners return to first and third.

**Play 2:** Runners on first and third, no outs. Runner on first is stealing as the batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop. Anticipating a double play, the runner from first intentionally rolls into and grabs the second baseman who is covering second and waiting for the throw from the shortstop.

**Ruling 2:** Runner on first is guilty of willfully and deliberately interfering with a fielder with the obvious intent to deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play. Runner from first is declared out and so is the batter-runner. Runner returns to third.

**Play 3:** Bases loaded, no outs, ground ball to shortstop. Shortstop's throw to second retires the runner from first. However, anticipating a double play, runner from first intentionally slides out of the base line and crashes into the second baseman just as he is beginning his throw to first base. Runner is not able to reach second base with his hand or foot.

**Ruling 3:** Runner is guilty of willfully and deliberately interfering with a fielder with the obvious intent to deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play. Batter-runner is declared out because of the interference, and runners return to second and third. Note in this example that if the runner had not been ruled out at second (i.e., if the throw pulls the fielder off the bag) and the runner had still intentionally interfered in the manner described, **both** he and the batter-runner would be declared out.

**Play 4:** Runners on first and second, no outs. On a hit and run play, batter hits a ground ball to deep short. Runner from first makes a clean slide at second and is ruled safe. However, the runner then grabs the second baseman's arm as he is throwing to first base.

**Ruling 4:** Runner from first is out for interference. However, the batter is awarded

first base and the runner returns to second. The runner intentionally interfered with the second baseman's throw, but he did **not** willfully and deliberately interfere with the obvious intent to deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play. The runner's intent in this case was to reach second safely, and subsequently he interfered with the second baseman's throw to first. Consequently, he is the only player called out on the play.

**Play 5:** Runner on first, no outs. Batter hits a ground ball to the second baseman, who attempts to tag the runner. However, the runner, in the judgment of the umpire, intentionally tries to slap the ball out of the fielder's glove, or tackles or grabs hold of the fielder so that the fielder is not able to make a play.

**Ruling 5:** The runner has willfully and deliberately interfered with a fielder with the obvious intent to prevent a double play. Runner from first is declared out and so is the batter-runner.

In plays of this nature, the umpire shall be governed by the **intent** of the base runner. If the umpire judges that the runner **willfully and deliberately interfered with the obvious intent to deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play**, he shall declare **both** the runner and batter-runner out. If this is not the case, the umpire shall declare only the runner out. Note, however, that if in these situations the runner has already been put out, then the runner on whom the defense was attempting a play shall be declared out. (See Section 7.4, "Interference by Runner Already Put Out.")

### 7.4 INTERFERENCE BY RUNNER ALREADY PUT OUT

If any batter or runner who has just been put out or any runner who has just scored, hinders or impedes any following play being made on a runner, such runner shall be declared out for the interference of his teammate. The runner should be able to reach the base with his hand or foot if he is attempting to break up a double play.

### 7.5 BATTED BALL STRIKING THE RUNNER

The concept of the runner being in jeopardy after the ball goes past an infielder and strikes him in a situation where another infielder still has a chance to make a play on the ball applies **ONLY** when the ball **PASSES** the first infielder without being touched or deflected by him. This concept **DOES NOT APPLY** if the ball is **touched** or **deflected** by the first infielder, **even though another infielder has a chance to make a play on the ball**.

In other words, after a ball has been touched (deflected) by any infielder (including the pitcher), if the ball then strikes a runner (unintentionally on the part of the runner), the ball is alive and in play even if another infielder may be in position to field the ball. (See Official Baseball Rules 5.09(f) and 7.09(k).)

The reasoning for the above concept is that a runner cannot be expected to avoid a deflected ball while he is running and should not, therefore, be in jeopardy of being called out for being struck by such a deflected ball. Of course, a runner may still be guilty of intentional interference even after an infielder deflects the ball if he (the runner) deliberately deflects it or allows it to strike him when he could have reasonably avoided it. The fact that the ball has been deflected by an infielder should not be taken as a

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license for a runner to intentionally interfere. (See Official Baseball Rule 7.09(f) and (g).)

After a batted ball has been touched (deflected) by an infielder, if the ball then strikes a runner (unintentionally on the part of the runner), it is alive and in play despite the fact that another infielder may be in position to field the ball. This is **not** the case if a fielder is **making a play on the ball**. Specifically, if a batted ball is deflected by an infielder and another infielder has a play on the ball, the runner must avoid the fielder. If the runner interferes with the fielder making a play - even though the ball has been touched by another fielder - the runner is declared out. Under the rules, a fielder making a play on a batted ball takes priority.

On the other hand, if a batted ball goes through or by an infielder (other than the pitcher) *without touching the fielder* and then strikes a runner immediately behind the infielder, the umpire must then determine if another infielder has a chance to make a play on the ball. If the umpire determines another infielder **does** have a chance, the runner is **out**. If the umpire determines another infielder **does not** have a chance, the ball is **alive** and **in play**.

The interpretation to be made with regard to the phrase *“a fair ball goes through, or by, an infielder, and touches a runner immediately back of him”* (Official Baseball Rules 7.09(k) and 5.09(f)) is that this refers to a ball that passes through the infielder’s legs, or by his immediate vicinity, and strikes a runner directly behind the infielder.

#### **EXAMPLES:**

**Play 1:** Runner on second base, one out. The batter hits a ball on the ground toward the hole. The third baseman charges in on the grass to try to cut it off as the shortstop breaks deep toward the hole while the runner is advancing. The ball gets past the third baseman without being touched by him and strikes the runner in the base path. The shortstop had a play on the ball.

**Ruling 1:** Runner from second is out and the batter-runner is awarded first base. The ball passed by but was not touched by an infielder other than the pitcher before striking the runner. However, another fielder behind the runner was deprived of an opportunity to field the ball.

**Play 2:** Runner on second base, one out. The batter hits a ground ball toward the hole. The third baseman charges in on the grass to cut it off and the shortstop breaks deep toward the hole as runner advances. The ball is deflected by the third baseman in the direction of the shortstop. The shortstop would have had a play on the ball, but the ball struck the runner, resulting in no play being possible.

**Ruling 2:** Runner from second is not out and the ball is alive and in play (assuming no intentional interference by runner from second). The fact that the shortstop would have been able to have a play on the ball had it not struck the runner is disregarded because the ball was deflected by the first infielder.

**Play 3:** Runner on first base, one out. Runner is running on the next pitch. The batter hits a ground ball back toward the pitcher. The pitcher deflects the ball in the direction of the second baseman who definitely has a chance to make a play on it. However, the ball strikes the runner before it reaches the second baseman.

**Ruling 3:** Runner from first is not out; the ball remains alive and in play (assuming no intentional interference by the runner). Compare this play with the following play.

**Play 4:** Runner on first base, one out. Runner is running on the next pitch. The batter hits a ground ball back toward the pitcher. The pitcher deflects the ball in the direction of the second baseman. As the runner is running directly to second base, he unintentionally bumps into the second baseman, who is attempting to field the deflected ball.

**Ruling 4:** Interference is called and the runner from first is declared out. Even though deflected, this is still a batted ball and the runner must avoid the fielder. The batter-runner is awarded first base. (See Ruling 5 in Section 7.30, "Obstruction and Interference Plays - Approved Rulings.")

**Play 5:** Runners on first and second, both runners stealing. Batter shows bunt, the first and third basemen move in, and the shortstop moves to cover third. The batter swings at the last minute and hits a ground ball in the direction of the shortstop position. However, the shortstop has moved to cover third base, and no one is in position to field the ball. The ground ball strikes the runner advancing from second base.

**Ruling 5:** Runner from second is declared out for being struck by a batted ball. The batter-runner is placed at first base. The ball is not considered to have gone through or by an infielder in this play.

**Play 6:** Runners on first and second, first and third basemen in for a bunt, both runners stealing. Batter shows bunt but swings at the last minute and hits a chopper over the head of the third baseman who has moved in about 20 feet. The ball strikes the runner advancing from second. Two parts: (a) Assume the shortstop was in a position to make a play on the ball; (b) Assume the shortstop was not in position to make a play on the ball.

**Ruling 6:** In (a), runner from second is declared out. The ball is considered going by the third baseman, but another fielder had a chance to make a play on the ball. In (b), the ball is alive and in play. The ball is considered going by the third baseman, but no other infielder had a chance to make a play on the ball.

**Play 7:** Runner on first base, hit-and-run. Batter hits a ground ball towards the second base position (which has been vacated by the second baseman, who is covering the bag at second). The ground ball strikes the runner advancing from first base.

**Ruling 7:** Runner from first is declared out for being struck by a fair batted ball. Batter-runner is awarded first base. The ball is not considered having passed through or by an infielder in this play.

**Play 8:** Runner on first base, one out. Runner is running on the next pitch. The batter hits a ground ball back toward the pitcher. The pitcher deflects the ball in the direction of the second baseman, who definitely has a chance to make a play on it. However, the ball strikes the runner before it reaches the second baseman. As a result of striking the runner, the ball caroms into the shortstop's glove, and the shortstop throws

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the batter-runner out at first base while the runner who was struck with the batted ball goes to second.

**Ruling 8:** The ball remains alive and in play (assuming no intentional interference by the runner originally on first). The batter-runner is out, and the runner originally on first is allowed to remain at second base.

**Play 9:** Runner on first base, first baseman positioned in front of the runner. Batter hits a ground ball just outside the reach of the first baseman as the first baseman dives to his right. The ball then strikes the runner.

**Ruling 9:** In this play the ball is considered having passed by an infielder. The umpire must now judge if another infielder has the chance to make a play on the ball. If the umpire judges yes, then the runner is declared out. If the umpire judges no, the ball is alive and in play.

**Play 10:** Bases loaded, no out. The infield is playing in. The batter hits a sharp ground ball which the third baseman deflects in the direction of the shortstop. Runner from second, seeing that the shortstop definitely will have a good chance of making a play on the ball, allows it to strike him. The ball caroms into left field and all runners take off.

**Ruling 10:** Runner from second is guilty of intentionally interfering with a batted ball to break up a possible double play. Runner from second is out and so is the batter-runner. Runners return to first and third. Runner from second was guilty of violating Official Baseball Rule 7.09(f).

**Play 11:** Runner on third, no out. Batter hits a sharp ground ball down the third base line which strikes the runner on third base in fair territory while the runner is still in contact with third base. Runner was not attempting to intentionally interfere and the third baseman is playing behind the runner.

**Ruling 11:** Runner is declared out. Ball is dead, and the batter-runner is awarded first base. The fact that the runner had contact with the base when struck with the batted ball has no bearing on the play. (An exception to this is when the runner is hit by an infield fly while on base. See Section 7.7, "Infield Fly Hits Runner on Base.")

**Play 12:** Runner on second base, no one out. Batter bunts the ball down the third base line. Pitcher and third baseman hover over the ball and let it roll down the line toward third, hoping it will go foul. The ball continues to roll down the line in fair territory with the pitcher and third baseman following it. The ball ends up rolling to third base, strikes the base, and then strikes the runner from second base who is now standing on third.

**Ruling 12:** Even though the ball has technically not passed a fielder, the ball is alive and in play because the fielders had an opportunity to field the batted ball but chose not to. The runner is not out in this situation.

### **TO SUMMARIZE:**

A runner is out when struck by a batted ball (unintentional on the part of the runner) **unless:**

1. The ball has been touched by an infielder;

or

2. The ball has passed through or by an infielder (i.e., through the infielder's legs or past the reach of the infielder attempting to field the ball) **AND** no other infielder has a chance to make a play on the ball.

Also, a runner must attempt to avoid a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball, even if the ball was deflected by another fielder.

## **7.6 RUNNER INTERFERES WITH FIELDER WHILE IN CONTACT WITH BASE**

If a runner has contact with a legally occupied base when he hinders a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball, he shall not be called out unless, in the umpire's judgment, such hindrance, whether it occurs on fair or foul territory, is **intentional**. If the umpire declares the hindrance **intentional**, the following penalty shall apply: With less than two out, the umpire shall declare both the runner and batter out. With two out, the umpire shall declare the batter out. (See Casebook Comments to Official Baseball Rule 7.08(b).)

## **7.7 INFIELD FLY HITS RUNNER ON BASE**

If a runner is touching his base when touched by an Infield Fly, he is not out, although the batter is out. Further, if the Infield Fly touches him while on base in fair territory before touching or passing an infielder, the ball is dead and no runners may advance. (See Official Baseball Rule 7.08(f), Section 9.5, "Infield Fly" and Section 9.7, "Infield Fly Intentionally Dropped.")

**Play 1:** Infield Fly is declared. Runner from first unintentionally interferes with second baseman, who is attempting to catch the fly ball.

**Ruling 1:** On Infield Fly, the ball is alive and in play. Therefore, the runner is out for interference and the batter-runner is out under the Infield Fly. Other runners return to the base occupied at the time of interference.

## **7.8 INFIELD FLY HITS RUNNER NOT ON BASE**

If a runner is touched by an Infield Fly when he is not touching his base (provided the ball has not touched or passed through an infielder), both runner and batter are out and the ball is dead. (See Official Baseball Rule 7.08(f), Section 9.5, "Infield Fly" and Section 9.7, "Infield Fly Intentionally Dropped.")

## **7.9 THREE-FOOT LANE**

The lines marking the three-foot lane are part of that "lane," but the interpretation to be made is that a runner is required to have **both feet** within the three-foot lane or on the lines marking the lane. If the runner straddles either boundary line running the last forty-five feet to first base, he is outside the lane. The batter is permitted to exit the three-foot lane by means of a step, stride, reach or slide in the immediate vicinity of first base for the sole purpose of touching first base. However, a batter-runner who runs to first base in fair territory and ignores the three-foot lane violates the spirit of the

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rule and would be out if he interferes with the fielder **any distance from first base**.

### **7.10 BATTER INTERFERES WITH CATCHER**

Under Official Baseball Rule 6.06(c), if the batter interferes with the catcher's throw to retire a runner by stepping out of the batter's box, the plate umpire shall call "interference." The batter is out and the ball is dead (provided the catcher's initial throw does not retire the runner; see following paragraph). No player may advance on such interference (offensive interference), and all runners must return to the last base that was, in the judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference. **EXCEPTION:** Batter is not out if the catcher's initial throw retires the runner, or if the runner trying to score is called out for the batter's interference.

If this infraction should occur in a situation where the catcher's initial throw directly retires the runner despite the infraction, the play stands the same as if no violation had occurred, as it is to be assumed there was no actual interference and that the runner is out - not the batter. In this case, any other runners on base at the time may advance, as the ruling is that there is no actual interference if the runner is retired. In that case play proceeds just as if no violation had been called.

If this infraction occurs after the batter is out on strike three, the runner is declared out for batter's interference.

### **7.11 THROWN BAT INTERFERES WITH FIELDER**

If a whole bat is thrown into fair territory and interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play, interference shall be called, whether intentional or not. However, if a bat breaks and part of it is in fair territory and is hit by a batted ball or part of it hits a runner or fielder, play shall continue and no interference shall be called.

### **7.12 PROCEDURE FOR PRACTICE SWING HITTING CATCHER'S MITT**

On occasions when the batter's practice swing tips the catcher's mitt before the delivery of the pitch, the procedure is for the plate umpire to call "Time" immediately. It is suggested that the umpire then use a foul tip signal while pointing to the catcher. (See Official Baseball Rule 6.08(c) last casebook comment.)

### **7.13 BACKSWING HITS CATCHER**

If a batter strikes at a ball and misses and in the umpire's judgment unintentionally hits the catcher or the ball in back of the batter on the follow-through or backswing while the batter is still in the batter's box, it shall be called a strike only (no interference). The ball will be dead, however, and no runner shall advance on the play. If this infraction should occur in a situation where the catcher's initial throw directly retires a runner despite the infraction, the play stands the same as if no violation had occurred. If this infraction should occur in a situation where the batter would normally become a runner because of a third strike not caught, the ball shall be dead and the batter declared out.

This interpretation applies even if the catcher is in the act of making a throw to retire a runner. That is, if the batter is in the batter's box and his normal backswing or follow-through unintentionally strikes the catcher or the ball while the catcher is in the

act of throwing, “Time” is called and runners return (unless the catcher’s initial throw retires the runner).

The proper mechanic is for the plate umpire to call, “Backswing hit the catcher” as soon as the violation occurs (while pointing at the infraction), and then to call “Time” as the play dictates.

After the play is over, the umpire should then turn toward the pressbox and announce and signal that such infraction has occurred - the same as he should do with any unusual play - in order that the ruling be made as clearly as possible.

### **7.14 BATTER INTERFERES WITH CATCHER’S THROW BACK TO PITCHER**

If the batter interferes with the catcher’s throw back to the pitcher by stepping out of the batter’s box while he is at bat (no runners attempting to advance), it shall not be considered interference under Official Baseball Rule 6.06(c). In such cases, the umpire shall call “Time” only (no interference). The ball will be dead and no runners shall advance on the play.

The interpretation does not, of course, give the batter license to intentionally interfere with the catcher’s throw back to the pitcher, and in such cases the batter shall be called out. If the batter becomes a runner on ball four and the catcher’s throw strikes him or his bat, the ball remains alive and in play (provided no intentional interference by the batter-runner).

If the batter interferes with the catcher’s throw to retire a runner by stepping out of the batter’s box, interference shall be called on the batter under Official Baseball Rule 6.06(c).

However, if the batter is standing in the batter’s box and he or his bat is struck by the catcher’s throw back to the pitcher (or throw in attempting to retire a runner) and, in the umpire’s judgment there is no intent on the part of the batter to interfere with the throw, consider the ball alive and in play.

### **7.15 BATTER INTERFERES AFTER THIRD STRIKE NOT CAUGHT**

Official Baseball Rule 7.09(a) provides that the batter-runner be called out for interference if “after a third strike he hinders the catcher in his attempt to field the ball.”

**Play 1:** First base unoccupied or two out. Strike three not caught. Batter-runner unintentionally kicks, touches, or otherwise deflects the pitched ball that was not caught by the catcher. Catcher is unable to make a play.

**Ruling 1:** If this occurs in the vicinity of home plate, the ball is alive and in play. However, if this occurs up the first base line (where the batter-runner has had time to avoid the ball), interference is called, the batter-runner is declared out and runners return to bases occupied at time of pitch.

### **7.16 CATCHER’S INTERFERENCE**

Under Official Baseball Rule 6.08(c), if catcher’s interference is called with a play



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in progress, the umpire will allow the play to continue because the manager may elect to take the play - *unless* the batter reaches first base and *all* other runners advance one base, in which event the play stands and the manager has no option to take the interference penalty.

The umpire should indicate catcher's interference by pointing at and calling the infraction.

The manager shall make the election to take the play or take the interference penalty by advising the plate umpire immediately following the play, and once made, such election cannot be changed.

If the batter-runner misses first base, or a runner misses his next base, he shall be considered as having reached the next base, as referred to in the Note to Official Baseball Rule 7.04(d) and as stated in the Approved Ruling of Official Baseball Rule 8.05.

A runner who misses the first base to which he is advancing and who is called out on appeal shall be considered as having advanced one base for the purpose of this rule.

If a runner is attempting to steal a base when the catcher interferes with the batter, the runner is awarded the base on the interference. Runners not attempting to steal or not forced to advance remain on the base they occupied at the time of the interference unless Official Baseball Rule 7.07 applies. Under Official Baseball Rule 7.07, if a runner is **stealing home** when the catcher interferes with the batter, the additional penalty of a **balk** is invoked, which enables all runners on base to advance (whether or not they were stealing).

It is suggested that the umpire then indicate the infraction by announcing (while facing the official scorer), "Catcher's interference!" while indicating a motion similar to a foul tip signal and then pointing to the catcher.

## **7.17 CATCHER INTERFERES WITH BATTER BEFORE PITCH**

If the catcher interferes with the batter before the pitcher delivers the ball, it shall not be considered interference under Official Baseball Rule 6.08(c). In such cases, the umpire shall call "Time" and the pitcher and batter start over from "scratch."

## **7.18 BATTED BALL STRIKES HELMET OR BAT**

If a batted ball strikes a **helmet** accidentally (no intent on part of runner to interfere) in **fair** territory, the ball remains in play the same as if it had not hit the helmet.

If a batted ball strikes a **helmet** accidentally (no intent on part of runner to interfere) in **foul** territory, it is a foul ball.

If a batted ball strikes a **bat** or part of a bat accidentally (no intent on part of runner to interfere) in **foul** territory, it is a foul ball.

If the batter-runner drops his **bat** and the ball rolls against the bat in **fair** territory and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is alive and in play.

If after hitting or bunting a fair ball, the batter's **bat** hits the ball a second time in fair territory, the batter is out and the ball is dead.

If, in the umpire's judgment, there is intent on the part of a base runner to interfere

with a batted **ball (fair or foul)** by dropping his helmet or bat or by throwing either at the ball, then the runner would be out, the ball dead, and runners would return to last base legally touched. (See also Casebook Comments to Official Baseball Rule 6.05(h).)

### 7.19 THROWN BALL STRIKES HELMET OR BAT

If a thrown ball strikes a helmet or bat accidentally (no intent on part of runner to interfere) in fair or foul territory, the ball remains in play the same as if it had not hit the helmet or bat.

If, in the umpire's judgment, there is intent on the part of a base runner to interfere with a thrown ball by dropping his helmet or bat or by throwing either at the ball, then the runner would be out, the ball dead and runners would return to the last base legally touched.

### 7.20 BATTED BALL STRIKES OBJECT ON FOUL TERRITORY

If a batted ball strikes a batting helmet or any other object foreign to the natural ground while on foul territory, it is a foul ball.

### 7.21 BALL STRIKES BIRD OR ANIMAL

If a batted or thrown ball strikes a bird in flight or other animal on the playing field, consider the ball alive and in play the same as if it had not touched the bird or animal. If a pitched ball strikes a bird in flight or other animal on the playing field the pitch is nullified and play shall be resumed with the previous count.

### 7.22 INTERFERENCE BY PERSON AUTHORIZED TO BE ON PLAYING FIELD

Any act by a person authorized to be on the field under Official Baseball Rule 3.15 in which he **voluntarily** touches a ball in play is to be considered "intentional" interference. The ball is dead when touched and such penalty imposed as will nullify the interference. A ball that in the umpire's judgment "accidentally" touches any person authorized to be on the field under Official Baseball Rule 3.15 should be considered "unintentional" and the ball is alive and in play.

If a person authorized to be on the field unintentionally interferes with a fielder attempting to make a play, the ball is alive and in play.

The question of intentional or unintentional interference shall be decided on the person's **actions**. **EXAMPLE:** A bat boy, ball attendant, security person, etc. who tries to avoid being touched by a thrown or batted ball but still is touched by the ball would be involved in **unintentional** interference. If, however, such person kicks the ball or picks it up or pushes it, that is considered **intentional** interference regardless of such person's actual intent.

In assessing the penalties under this rule, umpires should decide what in their judgment would have reasonably taken place if the intentional interference had not occurred.

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**Play 1:** Player in bullpen picks up a fair batted ball.

**Ruling 1: Defensive player:** Interference by person authorized to be on the playing field. The ball is dead when touched and such penalty imposed as will nullify the interference. **Offensive player:** Interference by person authorized to be on the playing field unless in the umpire's judgment the offensive player purposely interfered with the batted ball with the intent to hinder the play, in which case the umpire shall rule offensive interference and declare the batter-runner out. Other runners would return to the base last occupied at the time of pitch. If the fielder is in the act of making a play on another runner when the offensive player purposely interferes, the umpire would declare such runner out and return other runners to the base occupied at the time of interference. (See Official Baseball Rule 3.15 and 7.11.)

## 7.23 SPECTATOR INTERFERENCE

When a spectator interferes with a ball in play, whether a batted ball or a thrown ball, the umpire shall impose such penalty or penalties as in the umpire's judgment will nullify the act of interference. This gives the umpire the right to declare a batter out if, in the umpire's judgment, a spectator clearly prevents a player from catching a fly ball, and gives the umpire the right to place the batter and the runners at the bases that, in the umpire's judgment, they would have reached had the interference not occurred.

There is a difference between a ball that has been thrown or batted into the stands touching a spectator, thereby being out of play even though it rebounds onto the field; and a spectator going onto the field or reaching over, under, or through a barrier and touching a ball in play or touching or otherwise interfering with a player. In the latter case it is clearly spectator interference and shall be dealt with as "intentional" interference as covered in Official Baseball Rule 3.15 (interference with person authorized to be on the playing field). The batter and all runners shall be placed where in the umpire's judgment they would have been had the interference not occurred.

The fielder is confined to the limits of the playing field, but may reach over any fence, railing, or any line of demarcation to make a catch. The fielder may also jump on top of a railing marking the boundary of the field or on any tarp that may be on foul ground in order to make a play (unless ground rules prohibited). (See also Section 9.1, "Legal Catch.")

No interference shall be allowed when a fielder reaches over a fence, railing, rope or into a stand to catch a ball. **Fielders do so at their own risk.** However, should a spectator reach out on the playing-field side of such fence, railing, or rope and plainly prevent the fielder from catching the ball, then the batter should be called out for the spectator's interference.

The umpire shall call spectator interference by first signaling and calling "Time" (both hands overhead) to halt play and then grasping the left wrist with right hand (held above the head) to indicate spectator interference.

When there is intentional interference with a ball in play, either by a spectator or by a person permitted on the playing field (as covered in Official Baseball Rule 3.15), the ball is dead the instant the interference occurs. The umpire who calls the interference (any umpire may call it) should consult with other umpires to determine what reasonably might have happened had the interference not occurred.

The spectator interference rule states specifically that the umpire shall impose such

penalty or penalties as in the umpire's judgment will nullify the act of interference, and the ball is dead the instant the interference occurs.

It is possible to have spectator interference on a ball pitched to the batter. If a wild pitch does not go into the stands but remains in play and is interfered with by a spectator, the spectator interference penalty shall apply.

The very nature of the game requires different consideration of what may at first seem the same play (dimensions of the ball park, speed of runner, etc.). The umpires should consider all factors in determining penalties for spectator interference. (See also Official Baseball Rule 3.16.)

### 7.24 INTENTIONALLY DEFLECTING COURSE OF FOUL BALL

Official Baseball Rule 7.09(b) provides that the batter or runner is out for interference if he intentionally "deflects the course of a foul ball in any manner." While picking up a foul ball or otherwise touching it may not, by such act itself, actually deflect the course of the ball, an umpire may judge such act as deflecting the course of the ball if, in the umpire's judgment, the ball might have become a fair ball had it not been touched.

It would be better if no member of the offensive team picked up or otherwise touched a foul ball. There is no objection to a coach returning a foul ball to the umpire after it has passed first or third base, but the coach should not touch a ball that possibly may go fair. (See also Official Baseball Rule 6.05(i).)

### 7.25 INFIELDER INTERFERES WITH COURSE OF BALL

When a batted ball is rolling fair down the foul line between home plate and either first or third base and a fielder stoops down over the ball and blows on it or in any other manner does some act that in the judgment of the umpire causes the ball to roll onto foul territory, the umpire shall rule a **fair ball**. The ball is alive and in play.

### 7.26 OBSTRUCTION

Obstruction is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner.

If a fielder is about to receive a thrown ball and if the ball is in flight directly toward and near enough to the fielder so he must occupy his position to receive the ball, he may be considered "in the act of fielding a ball." It is entirely up to the judgment of the umpire as to whether a fielder is in the act of fielding a ball.

After a fielder has made an attempt to field a ball and has **missed**, he can no longer be in the "act of fielding" the ball. For example: if an infielder dives at a ground ball and the ball **passes him** and he continues to lie on the ground and delays the progress of the runner, he very likely has obstructed the runner.

In all cases of obstruction, the umpire calling the play should have the benefit of the advice of his partners. The umpire watching the obstruction will have difficulty in determining the position of other runners. It is recommended that when "Time" is called on obstruction, if there is any doubt in the minds of the umpires about where the runner or runners shall be placed, the umpires shall confer.

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## 7.27 OBSTRUCTION MECHANIC

There are two types of obstruction, and a different mechanic is used with each type:

① The first type of obstruction (Official Baseball Rule 7.06(a)) deals with cases when **the runner is obstructed while a play is being made on him.**

Examples of this type of obstruction include:

1. Runner is obstructed during a rundown.
2. Runner is obstructed as a fielder is making a direct throw to a base in an attempt to retire that runner.
3. Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a **ground ball to an infielder.**
4. Any other example where a play is being made directly on the runner at the moment he is obstructed.

This type of obstruction is to be signaled by the umpire immediately calling “Time” (both hands overhead) and then pointing laterally at the obstruction while calling loudly and clearly, “That’s obstruction.” The ball is dead immediately under this section of the obstruction rule, and all runners shall be awarded bases they would have reached had there been no obstruction. Furthermore, the obstructed runner shall be awarded at least one base beyond his last legally touched base at the time of obstruction.

Note that this section of the obstruction rule (i.e., runner obstructed while play being made on him) also provides for cases when a thrown ball is in flight at the moment the obstruction occurs. In such cases, the umpire shall take into consideration the results of the throw when making the award. As an example, if a throw is in flight at the moment the obstruction occurs (umpire calls “Time”) and if the throw turns out to be wild and goes out of play, all runners will be awarded **two bases**. In such cases as this, the umpires have the responsibility of determining whether a throw is made **before or after** the obstruction. If the umpire judges that a throw was made after the obstruction, the obstructed runner will be awarded only **one base** from the base he last touched at the time of obstruction.

② The second type of obstruction (Official Baseball Rule 7.06(b)) deals with cases when **the runner is obstructed while no play is being made on him.**

Examples of this type of obstruction include:

1. Batter-runner is obstructed in rounding first base on a base hit while the ball is in the outfield.
2. Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a ball hit to the outfield.
3. Runner from first steals second; catcher’s throw is wild and goes into center field; runner is obstructed in attempting to advance to third base. Ball is loose in the outfield when obstruction occurs.
4. Runner from second is obstructed while rounding third base on a hit to the outfield.

5. Any other example where no play is being made directly on the runner at the moment he is obstructed.

Under this section of the obstruction rule, the obstruction is to be signaled by the umpire pointing laterally at the obstruction while calling loudly and clearly, "That's obstruction." The ball is **not** dead, however, and the umpire shall allow play to **continue until all play has ceased and no further action is possible**. (See Note 1 that follows.) At that moment, he shall call "Time" and impose such penalties, if any, that in his judgment will nullify the act of obstruction. It is important to note that in cases occurring under this section of the obstruction rule, the umpire shall not call "Time" until all action has ceased and no further play is possible.

**NOTE 1:** Umpires are reminded that if a runner is obstructed under this second section of the obstruction rule, play is to proceed to completion - even if it results in a play later being made on the runner who was previously obstructed. However, if such a play on a previously obstructed runner results in that runner actually being tagged out before reaching the base to which he would have been awarded because of the obstruction, the umpire shall in that case call "Time" at the moment the runner is tagged out. He shall then impose such penalties that will nullify the obstruction which will include, of course, the obstructed runner being awarded the base to which he would be entitled because of the obstruction.

**NOTE 2:** *Runner Obstructed While No Play Being Made On Him:* In determining what base a runner will be awarded under this second section of the obstruction rule, it is permissible for the umpire to consider the position of the runner, ball and fielder at the moment the obstruction occurs. However, the ultimate decision in placing the runners shall not be made until all play has ceased and shall be based on the principle that the obstructed runner will be entitled to the base he would have reached had no obstruction occurred.

**NOTE 3:** If a runner is obstructed while no play is being made on him, the umpire making the call should have the benefit of input from his partners in determining what bases, if any, shall be awarded to the obstructed runner. In other words, the crew may confer in order to determine what reasonably might have happened had the obstruction not occurred.

**Play 1:** Batter-runner hits a fair ball down the right field line and is obstructed in rounding first base. At the moment the obstruction occurs, right fielder has not yet fielded the ball, and it appears at that moment that the batter-runner will end up with a stand-up double. However, as play proceeds, ball gets by the right fielder, and batter-runner continues on to third. Batter-runner is then thrown out at third base on a very close play.

**Ruling 1:** Since it is permissible for the umpire to consider the position of the runner, ball, and fielder at the moment the obstruction occurs, the umpire may initially plan on "protecting" the batter-runner as far as second base. However, as play continued, it became apparent that had the batter-runner not been obstructed in rounding first base, he would have reached third safely. Therefore, the moment the batter-runner is tagged out at third base, "Time" is called and batter-runner is awarded third on the obstruction. This decision is made on the principle that the umpire, in making awards on this type of obstruction, shall allow play to continue until no further action is possible and then shall make awards, if any, that will nullify the obstruction. In this example, if the umpire felt that the obstruction had no bearing on the fact that the batter-runner was thrown out at

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third, the out would stand.

## 7.28 BATTER-RUNNER AND CATCHER COLLIDE

When a catcher and batter-runner going to first base have contact while the catcher is attempting to field the ball, there is generally no violation and nothing should be called. This cannot be interpreted to mean, however, that flagrant contact by either party would not call for either an interference call or an obstruction call. Either one should be called only if the violation is flagrant in nature. A fielder has “right of way” to make a play, but an unavoidable collision cannot be construed as a violation on the part of either the runner or the catcher.

## 7.29 BATTER-RUNNER OBSTRUCTED BEFORE REACHING FIRST BASE

When the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base, it is not always the case that the batter-runner will be awarded first base on this type of obstruction. For example, if the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a fly ball or line drive that is **caught**, the batter-runner is **out**. The reasoning here is that the obstruction had no bearing on the fact that the batter hit a fly ball that was caught by the defense. Similarly, should the batter-runner be obstructed before reaching first base on a **foul ball** not caught, the **foul ball** prevails. Again, the reasoning is that the obstruction had nothing to do with the fact that the batter hit a foul ball.

Situations where the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base can generally be divided into three cases. Again note that in this type of obstruction, it is not always the case that “Time” is called immediately and the batter-runner awarded first base.

**Play 1:** Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a ground ball to an infielder. It appears that the infielder will have an easy play on the ball.

**Ruling 1:** This is obstruction under Official Baseball Rule 7.06(a). “Time” is called immediately and batter-runner is awarded first base.

**Play 2:** Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a pop-up or line drive to an infielder.

**Ruling 2:** Call the obstruction by pointing at the obstruction and calling “That’s obstruction.” However, leave the ball in play. If the pop-up or line drive is caught, batter-runner is out. **However**, if the pop-up or line drive is **dropped** (and is a fair ball) **and** if the batter-runner has not yet reached first base when the ball is dropped, “Time” is called and the batter-runner is awarded first base under Official Baseball Rule 7.06(a). Other runners would be awarded bases they would have reached had no obstruction occurred. (In this case, the play reverts back to the first play on the previous page.) On the other hand, if the batter-runner has clearly reached (or rounded) first base when the fly ball is dropped, play is allowed to continue until no further action is possible with the umpire then making awards, if any, that will nullify the obstruction. (In this case, the obstruction is treated as “Type 2” obstruction. See Section 7.27, “Obstruction Mechanic.”)

**Play 3:** Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a ball hit to the outfield.

**Ruling 3:** Call the obstruction by pointing at the obstruction and calling, “That’s obstruction;” however, leave the ball in play until all action has ceased. Then call “Time” and impose such penalties, if any, that will nullify the act of obstruction. If a fly ball is caught in this situation, batter-runner is out. If the batted ball was a fair ball not caught, the batter-runner will always be “protected” at least to first base.

### 7.30 OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE PLAYS – APPROVED RULINGS

**Play 1:** Runner on first base; batter-runner gets into a rundown between home and first. Can obstruction be called going back to home?

**Ruling 1:** No, unless the obstruction is **intentional**.

**NOTE:** In situations where the batter-runner gets into a rundown between first and home, if the batter-runner retreats and **reaches** home plate, he shall be declared out.

**Play 2:** Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base with no play being made on him; for example, on a ball hit to the outfield.

**Ruling 2:** Call the obstruction by pointing at the infraction and calling, “That’s obstruction;” however, leave the ball in play until play is over. Then impose such penalties, if any, that will nullify the act of obstruction. If fly ball is caught in this situation, batter-runner is out.

**Play 3:** Runner is on second base when the batter-runner is obstructed after reaching first base. The umpire intends to award the batter-runner second base on the obstruction. What happens to the runner on second?

**Ruling 3:** Runner on second is awarded third base.

**Play 4:** With bases loaded, batter hits a sharp ground ball which deflects off of the shortstop and starts to roll away from him. As the shortstop starts to go after the ball, runner from second collides with him.

**Ruling 4:** After the ball deflects off the shortstop, if the ball is *within the fielder’s immediate reach*, the runner must avoid the fielder, and if contact occurs under those circumstances, **interference** shall be called and the runner declared out. However, if the ball is **not within reach of the fielder** after it deflects off him (i.e., the fielder must chase after the ball), the fielder must then avoid the runner, and if contact occurs under those circumstances, **obstruction** shall be called under Official Baseball Rule 7.06(b).

**Play 5:** With a runner on first base, the batter hits a line drive back to the pitcher which deflects off of his glove and rolls toward the second baseman. As the second baseman is attempting to field the ball, the runner from first collides with the second baseman.

**Ruling 5:** In the judgment of the umpire if the second baseman has a legitimate play on the ball, the runner from first is called out for interference. The ball is dead



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at the moment of interference, and the batter-runner is awarded first base (provided the interference was not intentional; if intentional, both runner and batter-runner are declared out). However, if the umpire rules that the second baseman does not have a legitimate play on the ball (i.e., he was merely moving in the direction of a loose ball), then obstruction is called under Official Baseball Rule 7.06(b). (Compare with Plays 3 and 4 in Section 7.5, “Batted Ball Striking the Runner.”)

**Play 6:** Runner on first base, no one out. On a hit-and-run play, batter hits a fair ball down the right field line. In rounding second base and heading for third, the runner from first collides with the shortstop and falls down. Because of the collision, the runner is not able to advance to third base and returns to second as the ball is being thrown back to the infield. Had the runner not collided with the shortstop, he would have easily advanced to third base.

**Ruling 6:** Obstruction is called when the collision occurs but the ball remains in play since no play was being made on the obstructed runner at the moment he was obstructed. “Time” is called when all action has ceased, and the obstructed runner is awarded third base since that is the base he would have reached had no obstruction occurred. Batter-runner would also be placed at the base he would have reached had no obstruction occurred (either first or second, depending on the umpire’s judgment).

**NOTE:** In this play if the runner from first had been thrown out going back into second base, the umpire would call “Time” the moment the runner is tagged out. The obstructed runner would then be awarded third base (the base he would have reached had no obstruction occurred), and batter-runner would also be placed at the base he would have reached, in the umpire’s judgment, had no obstruction occurred.

**Play 7:** Batter hits a ground ball or pop-up between home and first base which the pitcher and first baseman both attempt to field. Batter-runner makes contact with one or both fielders in running to first base.

**Ruling 7:** Under Official Baseball Rule 7.09(j), “If two or more fielders attempt to field a batted ball and the runner comes in contact with one or more of them, the umpire shall determine which fielder is entitled to the benefit of the interference rule, and shall **NOT** declare the runner out for coming in contact with a fielder other than the one the umpire determines to be entitled to field such a ball.” It is therefore possible for the umpire to make either an **interference or obstruction** call on this play based upon his determination as to which fielder was entitled to field the batted ball. If the runner makes contact with a fielder, other than the one the umpire determines to be entitled to field the ball, such fielder has very likely obstructed the runner.

**Play 8:** Runner on second base, no outs. Pitcher attempts a pickoff at second and the runner gets into a rundown between second and third. During the rundown the runner is obstructed by the third baseman while a throw is in flight from the shortstop. The shortstop’s throw is wild and goes into the dugout.

**Ruling 8:** The runner is awarded home (two bases from his position at the time of the throw). The runner was obstructed while a play was being made on him (“Type 1” obstruction in Section 7.27, “Obstruction Mechanic”), and the umpire should call “Time” at the moment the obstruction occurs. However, under the Casebook Comments to

Official Baseball Rule 7.06(a), if a thrown ball is in flight before the obstruction is called by the umpire, runners shall be awarded such bases on wild throws as they would have been awarded had no obstruction occurred. Therefore, even though the runner was obstructed **while** a play was being made on him, in this situation he is awarded **two bases** from the time of the throw (and not the customary “at least **one** base beyond the base he last legally touched before the obstruction”).

**Play 9:** Runner on first base, no outs. Ground ball up the first base line. First baseman picks up the ball and throws to second base for a force out. After the out at second, the batter-runner is obstructed by the pitcher.

**Ruling 9:** “Time” is called and the batter-runner is awarded first base. The out at second base stands.

**Play 10:** Runner on first base, two out. Batter hits a fair ball into the right field corner. Right fielder throws to second to retire the batter-runner, who is advancing on the play. The throw is off-target and goes into left field. The batter-runner gets up and attempts to advance. The shortstop starts chasing after the ball and runs into the batter-runner. The batter-runner continues to advance and is thrown out on a close play at the plate.

**Ruling 10:** Obstruction is called when the contact occurs between the shortstop and the batter-runner. Play is allowed to continue because no play is being made on the runner at the moment he is obstructed. After the runner is out at home, if the umpires deem that the runner would have scored had he not been obstructed (i.e., the obstruction caused the runner to be out), “Time” is called and the batter-runner awarded home.

**Play 11:** Runner on third base, one out. Batter hits a fly ball to right-center field and the runner goes back to third base to tag up. Third baseman approaches the runner, faces him, and jockeys back and forth, intentionally trying to block the runner’s view of the fielder catching the ball.

**Ruling 11:** This is obstruction under Official Baseball Rule 7.06(b). The umpire should call the infraction when it occurs and award bases, if any, in the appropriate manner.

**Play 12:** With a runner on first base, the first baseman - rather than holding the runner in the traditional manner - jockeys back and forth in front of the runner, several feet to the second base side of the bag. In the umpire’s judgment the first baseman is doing this intentionally to block the runner’s view of the pitcher.

**Ruling 12:** While Official Baseball Rule 4.03(c) allows a fielder to position himself anywhere in fair territory, if the umpire deems the fielder’s actions are a deliberate effort to block the runner’s view of the pitcher, it is illegal and clearly not within the spirit of the rules. The first baseman should be warned to stop, and if he persists, he is subject to ejection.

**Play 13:** Runner on first base is stealing, no outs, no count on the batter. Pitcher pitches out. Batter, observing the pitch-out, intentionally throws his bat at the catcher in a feigned swing, and the bat strikes the catcher as he is catching the pitch or attempting

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to throw. Batter remains in the batter's box during this time.

**Ruling 13:** Interference. Batter is declared out unless the catcher's initial throw retires the runner, in which case the play stands.

**Play 14:** Runner on first base is stealing, three balls on the batter. The next pitch is a check-swing that the plate umpire initially rules a ball. The batter-runner takes off for first base and in so doing interferes (out of the batter's box) with the catcher's throw to retire the runner attempting to reach second. Runner is safe at second. An appeal is made to the base umpire regarding the check-swing, and the base umpire rules a swing.

**Ruling 14:** Batter's interference. Batter is declared out and runner returns to first base. Note that if this situation occurred with two strikes on the batter, then both the batter and runner are declared out.

## SECTION 8

# PITCHING REGULATIONS

### 8.1 WINDUP POSITION

Pitchers assume the windup position in one of three ways:

1. Facing the batter, **hands together**, pivot foot in contact with the rubber, other foot free. This is the “traditional” windup position. From this position (hands together) any natural movement associated with his delivery of the ball to the batter commits the pitcher to pitch without interruption.

2. Facing the batter, **hands apart** (usually at the side), pivot foot in contact with the rubber, other foot free. From this windup position, the pitcher goes directly into his delivery to the batter. If the pitcher uses this windup position (hands at side), the first movement of his hands or arms or feet that is associated with his delivery commits the pitcher to pitch.

3. Facing the batter, hands apart, pivot foot in contact with the rubber, other foot free. From this position (hands apart), the pitcher receives the sign from the catcher and then brings his hands together in a **stationary position** (“pause”) before beginning the delivery. Once the pitcher’s hands are together, he is in the “traditional” windup position. If a pitcher uses this windup position, the act of bringing his arms up and positioning his hands in front of his body shall **not** be construed as the start of his actual delivery **UNLESS** some other action is initiated by another part of his body simultaneously and is associated with the actual delivery.

Any of the three positions described above is considered a legal windup position, and from such windup position (regardless of whether the pitcher’s hands are together or apart), the pitcher may:

1. Deliver the ball to the batter;

or

2. Step and throw to a base in an attempt to pick off a runner;

or

3. Disengage the rubber by stepping back with his pivot foot first.

(Disengaging the rubber by stepping back with his **free foot first** is a balk when runners are on base regardless of whether the pitcher’s hands are together or apart.)

From any of the three types of windup positions referred to in this section, the pitcher may step and throw to a base in an attempt to pick off a runner (i.e., the pitcher is not required first to step off). Although this is not frequently seen, it is legal **provided** the pitcher does not make any motion associated with his delivery to the batter before the pitcher throws to the base.

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**Play 1:** Bases loaded, pitcher in windup position. Before making any motion associated with his delivery of the pitch to the batter, the pitcher turns, steps, and throws to second (or to first or to third) in one continuous motion in an attempt to pick off the runner.

**Ruling 1:** Legal move

**TO CLARIFY:**

1. If the pitcher's hands are held together in front of his body in a *stationary position* before he delivers to the batter, the preliminary action of bringing his hands together is **not** interpreted as the start of the actual windup or delivery to the batter. If, however, this preliminary action is accompanied by any other natural movement that is associated with the delivery to the batter, then the pitcher **is** committed to pitch without altering or interrupting his delivery once such motion is initiated.

2. If a pitcher does **not** assume a *stationary, hands-together position* prior to initiating his actual delivery, any natural movement associated with the start of his delivery commits the pitcher to pitch.

3. From the windup position, the pitcher may not go into a set or stretch position—if he does so, it is a balk when runners are on base.

4. In the windup position the pitcher must have both feet squarely on the ground.

5. Only a portion of the pitcher's pivot foot must be in contact with the rubber (not the "entire pivot foot"). This applies to both windup and set positions. Pitchers may pitch "off the end" of the rubber, as long as any part of the pivot foot is in contact with the rubber.

6. In the windup position, the pitcher's free foot may be on the rubber, in front of the rubber, to the side of the rubber, or behind the rubber.

7. In the windup position, the pitcher is permitted to step to the side during his delivery.

## **8.2 RESTRICTIONS ON PITCHERS WARMING UP**

The home club pitcher may not warm up on the mound prior to the start of the game. He may take only his eight preparatory pitches on the mound. This could give the home club pitcher some advantage, and since pre-game practice conditions should be equal for both starting pitchers, both pitchers should warm up where pitchers normally warm up.

A pitcher who is already in the game may go back to warm up in the bullpen between innings provided he does not delay the game.

Umpires shall allow eight preparatory pitches between innings and when a relief pitcher comes into the game. (See Official Baseball Rule 8.03.)

If a sudden emergency causes a pitcher to be summoned into the game without opportunity to warm up (e.g., game pitcher is injured or ejected), the umpire shall allow the new pitcher as many pitches as the umpire deems necessary. (See Official Baseball Rule 8.03.) Such pitcher shall warm up on the mound and not in the bullpen.

If a pitcher changes defensive positions and then returns to the mound during the same inning (which is allowed only once an inning), he will be allowed the usual eight warm-up pitches. (See Section 8.3, "Pitcher Changing Defensive Positions" and the

Casebook Comment to Official Baseball Rule 3.03.)

Following a rain delay, it is permissible for the pitcher of the defensive team to warm up on the mound. When the side is retired, the opposing pitcher will be granted extra time, if needed, to warm up on the mound. Umpires are to use good common sense in situations of this nature.

When a new pitcher has been called into the game, he shall take his place on the pitcher's rubber promptly at the call of the umpire. **If the pitcher ignores the call of the umpire, such violation is to be reported to the league office.**

### 8.3 PITCHER CHANGING DEFENSIVE POSITIONS

Under the Casebook Comment to Official Baseball Rule 3.03, a pitcher may change to a defensive position other than pitcher only **once** an inning. In other words, a pitcher may change to another defensive position and then return to the mound during the same inning, but after so doing he may not leave the mound again in that inning (unless, of course, he is removed from the game). If such pitcher returns to the mound during the same inning, he is allowed the usual eight warm-up pitches.

(See Section 8.2, "Restrictions on Pitchers Warming Up" and Section 4.4, "Designated Hitter.")

### 8.4 INTENTIONALLY PITCHING AT THE BATTER

*The following regulations are a result of the provisions of the Section 9.18, "On-Field Behavior Policy" and supersede the directives in Official Baseball Rule 8.02(d).*

A pitcher judged by the plate umpire to have intentionally delivered a pitched ball at a batter **will be immediately ejected** from the game. An umpire shall have the discretion, in accordance with Official Baseball Rule 8.02(d)(2), to warn a pitcher whom he/she feels may have intentionally thrown at a batter. If such warning is given to the pitcher, the manager of both teams shall be warned as well. After a warning has been issued, subsequent violations result in ejection of the pitcher and manager. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an umpire shall not be required to issue a warning prior to ejecting a player.

If the league president deems that the act was intentional, this infraction carries an automatic fine and suspension as provided in Section 9.18, "On-Field Behavior Policy."

Warnings should be indicated forcefully and assertively so there is no doubt in anyone's mind that a warning has been issued. The umpire should step out from behind the plate and assertively point at the pitcher while announcing the warning. The umpire should then do likewise and point toward each dugout while announcing the warning. He should also inform any subsequent pitcher entering the game.

Official Baseball Rule 8.02(d) additionally provides that if in the umpire's judgment, circumstances warrant, an official warning may be issued to both clubs prior to the start of the game or at any time during the game. It's not recommended that clubs be officially warned prior to a game except in the most extreme cases.

**A report must be filed with the league office and the Executive Director of the Professional Baseball Umpire Corp. any time a warning is issued, giving all specifics of the incident.** This is particularly important so that other crews may be advised of potential trouble.

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In the event a pitcher is removed from the game under Official Baseball Rule 8.02(d), the substitute pitcher should be allowed a sufficient number of pitches to warm up properly. See Section 8.2, “Restrictions on Pitchers Warming Up.”

**NOTE:** Team personnel may not come onto the playing surface to argue or dispute a warning issued under Rule 8.02(d). If a manager, coach or player leaves the dugout or his position to dispute a warning, he should be warned to stop. If he continues, he is subject to ejection.

## 8.5 BALK REGULATIONS

A balk shall be called audibly (“Balk!” or “That’s a balk!”) and by pointing laterally at the pitcher. However, the ball is **not** dead automatically when this call is made. The ball becomes dead only when the umpire calls “Time” following the call of balk, and the call of “Time” is to be made only when play stops (i.e., when it is apparent that all runners including the batter-runner will not advance one base). (See Section 8.9, “Calling Time After a Balk.”)

### REGULATIONS:

a) The pitcher shall be charged with a balk if, while in contact with the rubber, he attempts a pickoff at first base and throws to the first baseman who is either in front of or behind first base and obviously not making an attempt at retiring the runner. However, there is no violation if the pitcher throws the ball directly to **first base** in this situation. Also note that there is no violation if the pitcher attempts a pickoff at second or third and throws to an infielder who is in front of or behind either of those bases (i.e., this violation is only in reference to pickoffs at *first base*).

b) There is no violation if a pitcher attempts a pickoff at second base and seeing no fielder covering the bag, throws to the shortstop or second baseman, neither of whom is in the vicinity of the bag nor is making an actual attempt to retire the runner.

c) When a pitcher swings **any part** of his free foot past the back edge of the pitcher’s rubber, it is a balk if he does not pitch to the batter, unless he throws (or feints a throw) to second base on a pickoff play. (Note that this violation is in reference only to the pitcher’s **foot**. If the **knee** of the pitcher’s free leg passes behind the back edge of the rubber but his foot does not, he may legally throw to first base with no violation.)

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### *Items d) through h) deal with step balks:*

d) Official Baseball Rule 8.05(c), requires the pitcher, while touching his plate, must **step directly** toward a base **before** throwing to that base. If a pitcher turns or spins off of his free foot without actually stepping or if he turns his body and throws **before** stepping, it is a balk. (See Section 8.6, “Stepping To a Base.”)

**NOTE:** The pitcher is required to step directly toward a base when feinting a throw to a base.

Umpires should indicate balks called under Official Baseball Rule 8.05(c) (no step) by slapping the side of their leg after calling the balk. This indicates the balk is for failure to step directly towards a base.

e) A manager may come out and question the reason for **ANY** type of balk call and

shall not be ejected for his visit to learn why the balk was called. He may be ejected if he continues to argue the call after an explanation.

f) If a pitcher, while touching his plate, jumps into the air with both feet simultaneously and his non-pivot foot lands in a **step** toward first base before he throws to that base, he has made a legal move. (See Section 8.6, "Stepping To a Base.")

g) A pitcher must step directly toward a base before throwing or feinting to that base, but he is not required to throw (except to first base only) because he steps. It is possible, with runners on first and third, for the pitcher to step toward third and not throw, merely to bluff the runner back to third; then seeing the runner on first start for second, turn and step toward and throw to first base. This is legal. However, if, with runners on first and third, the pitcher, while in contact with the rubber, steps toward third and then immediately and **in practically the same motion** "wheels" and throws to first base, it is obviously an attempt to deceive the runner at first base, and in such a move it is practically impossible to step directly toward first base before the throw to first base, and such a move shall be ruled a balk. Of course, if the pitcher steps off the rubber and then makes such a move, it is not a balk.

**NOTE:** With runners on first and third, if a pitcher fakes a throw to third base and then throws the ball to first base, *arm motion is not required* in the fake to third, although a legal step *is* required. Also, in the fake to third base, the pitcher must break contact with the rubber before throwing to first base. If the ball is thrown out of play in the throw to first, the pitcher would be considered an infielder for the purpose of the award.

h) It is legal for a right-handed pitcher to begin a pickoff move to first base by first moving his pivot foot in the direction of third base **provided** that he makes a **legal step** toward first base with his non-pivot foot before throwing there and provided that the move is continuous and without interruption. A pitcher who makes such a pickoff move is considered to be in contact with the rubber when he makes his throw to first base.

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i) When using the set position with runners on base, a pitcher must come to a complete stop with his front foot on the ground. (See also Section 8.13, "Pitcher Not Stopping in Set Position Without Runners on Base.")

j) It is a balk if the pitcher, while touching the pitching rubber, accidentally or intentionally drops the ball. However, a pitched ball which slips out of a pitcher's hand and crosses the foul line shall be called a "Ball;" otherwise it will be called no pitch. If the ball does not cross the foul line, this would be a balk with men on base.

k) If the pitcher steps off of the rubber with his non-pivot foot when pitching from the windup position, the pitcher shall be charged with a balk.

l) If the pitcher places the resin bag in his glove with, in the umpire's judgment, the intent of deceiving the runner, it is a balk.

m) Prior to assuming a legal pitching position (windup or set position) it is permissible for the pitcher to **momentarily adjust** the ball in his glove. In order for this to be allowed, the movement must be **momentary** in nature. If the pitcher has his hands together long enough that, in the judgment of the umpire, it appears that he has actually come to a set position or has actually assumed the wind-up position, then should the pitcher separate his hands, a balk shall be called under Official Baseball Rule 8.05(j).

n) After coming to a legal pitching position (windup or set), if the pitcher removes



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one hand from the ball other than in an actual pitch or in throwing to a base, it is a balk.

o) Under Official Baseball Rule 7.07, if a runner is **stealing home** when the catcher interferes with the batter, an additional penalty of a **balk** is invoked which enables **all** runners on base to advance (whether or not they were stealing).

(See Section 7.16, “Catcher’s Interference.”)

p) The pitcher shall be charged with a balk if he stands on or astride the pitcher’s plate without the ball. **(He may be on the dirt without the ball.)**

q) A pitcher who assumes his windup position with the heel of his non-pivot foot off the ground is to be charged with a balk if in stepping off the rubber he drops the heel of his non-pivot foot before disengaging the rubber with his pivot foot.

r) It is a balk if the pitcher, while giving an intentional base on balls, pitches when the catcher is not in the catcher’s box.

## 8.6 STEPPING TO A BASE

The pitcher, while touching the rubber, must step **directly** toward a base before throwing to that base. If a pitcher turns or spins off of his free foot without actually stepping, it is a balk.

In stepping to a base, the pitcher must lift his entire non-pivot foot off the ground and bring it down in a location different from where it started and toward the base. The entire non-pivot foot must move in a **direction toward** and **distance to** the base. This will constitute a step. He is not allowed to lift his non-pivot foot up and bring it back down in the same spot where it started. In stepping, the heel of his free foot may not end up in the same spot it started.

**Play 1:** Runners on first and third, pitcher in set position. Pitcher steps directly toward third base without using an arm motion and then comes off the rubber and whirls around and throws to first base.

**Ruling 1:** Legal play.

## 8.7 THROWING TO AN UNOCCUPIED BASE

Official Baseball Rule 8.05(d) provides that the pitcher be charged with a balk if, while in contact with the rubber, he throws to an unoccupied base **except for the purpose of making a play**.

**Play 1:** Runners on first and second, pitcher in set position. Runner breaks for third base and pitcher throws to third base.

**Ruling 1:** Legal play.

**Play 2:** Runners on first and second, pitcher in set position. Runner bluffs going to third base and pitcher throws to third base. However, runner did not go.

**Ruling 2:** Balk under Official Baseball Rule 8.05(d).

The key to understanding the above two plays is for the umpire to use good judgment in deciding whether or not the runner was making an actual attempt to advance to third base or whether he was bluffing. These plays will most likely happen with a 3-2 count and two out.

Another interpretation regarding Official Baseball Rule 8.05(d) concerns appeal plays:

It is **NOT** a balk for the pitcher, while in contact with the rubber, to throw to an unoccupied base **IF** it is for the purpose of making an appeal play. (Note that the pitcher does not have to step back off the rubber to make an appeal play.)

### 8.8 PENALTY FOR BALK

Under Official Baseball Rule 8.05, the penalty for a balk shall be: The ball is dead (**when play stops**), and each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out unless the batter reaches first on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter, or otherwise and all other runners advance at least one base, in which case the play proceeds without reference to the balk.

The penalty for a balk provides that if a batter reaches first base safely on a hit or error, base on balls, or otherwise on a pitch on which a balk is called, he shall be entitled to first base **only if all other runners have advanced one base or more on the play**, in which case the balk is disregarded. If the **batter-runner and all other runners** do not advance, the balk penalty prevails, the batter must return to the batter's box with the previous count, and runners advance one base as penalty for the balk.

A runner who misses the first base to which he is advancing and who is called out on appeal shall be considered as having advanced one base for the purpose of this rule.

When a balk is made on a pitch that is a fourth ball it shall be ruled the same as when the batter hits a balk pitch and is safe on a hit or error, provided all runners advance at least one base on the play. Therefore, with a runner on first, first and second, or first, second and third, when a balk is called on the fourth ball, the batter goes to first base and all runners advance at least one base. If they attempt to advance more than one base, they do so at their own risk.

However, if first base is not occupied and all other runners do not advance at least one base on the play, the balk penalty prevails: The ball is dead; the batter returns to the batter's box and assumes the same ball and strike count as before the balk pitch; and all runners are allowed to advance one base as penalty for the balk.

Note that in cases where a pitcher balks and throws wild, either to a base or home plate, a runner or runners may advance beyond the base to which he is entitled at his own risk.

(See Section 8.10, "Foreign Substance on Ball or Pitcher, Defacement of the Ball.")

### 8.9 CALLING "TIME" AFTER A BALK

The penalty for balk allows the play to proceed without reference to the balk **if** the batter and all runners advance one base on the pitch following the balk (i.e., the actual pitch and/or action caused by the batter hitting the ball). The umpire shall not call "Time" until play stops following the balk. The question arises as to when the umpire is to call

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“Time” to kill the ball after calling a balk. The following cases should help explain when play is considered “stopped” and at what moment the umpire should call “Time” following the call of balk:

1. If the pitcher balks and does not throw the ball, call “That’s a balk. Time.” and enforce the balk.

2. If the balk is followed by a batted ball, leave the ball in play until it is apparent that the batter and all runners will not advance one base. At that moment, call “Time” and enforce the balk.

If, however, the batter reaches first and all runners advance at least one base on the play following the balk, play proceeds **without reference to the balk**.

**Play 1:** If a batted ball follows the balk and results in a fly ball that is caught, call “Time” the moment the fly ball is caught, then enforce the balk.

**Play 2:** If a batted ball follows the balk and results in a ground out on a previous runner at the base to which he would be entitled because of the balk, call “Time” the moment the out is made, then enforce the balk.

3. If the balk is followed by a pitch that is **caught** by the catcher, call “Time” the moment the catcher catches the ball, then enforce the balk. (Note the exception in “Ball Four” situations covered in case 5 below.)

4. If the balk is followed by a pickoff throw to a base that is **caught** by a fielder, call “Time” the moment the fielder catches the ball, then enforce the balk.

5. If the balk is followed by “Ball Four” delivered to the batter and is caught by the catcher, call “Time” and enforce the balk **unless** all runners advance one base because of “Ball Four.” In that situation, play proceeds **without reference to the balk**.

6. If the balk is followed by a pitch which strikes the batter, call “Time” the moment the pitch strikes the batter. Then enforce the balk unless the hit batsman forces **all** other runners to advance one base, in which case play proceeds **without reference to the balk**.

7. If the balk is followed by a **wild throw** to a base, the Approved Ruling of Official Baseball Rule 8.05 provides that the runner may advance beyond the base to which he is entitled at his own risk. In that situation, the umpire shall call the balk in the usual manner but shall not call “Time” until **all play has ceased** (runners have stopped trying to advance **and** a fielder is in possession of the ball in the infield).

8. If the balk is followed by a **wild pitch**, the Approved Ruling of Official Baseball Rule 8.05 provides that the runner may advance beyond the base to which he is entitled at his own risk. In that situation, the umpire shall call the balk in the usual manner but shall not call “Time” until **all play has ceased** (runners have stopped trying to advance **and** a fielder is in possession of the ball in the infield).

Note that even if the runner advances to or beyond the base to which he is entitled because of a wild pitch following a balk, the balk is still “acknowledged.” That is, the pitch is nullified and the batter will resume his at bat with the count on him when the balk occurred unless:

- a) The wild pitch was ball four on which all runners advanced one base; or
- b) The wild pitch was strike three on which the batter and all other runners advanced one base.

In both situations above, play proceeds **without reference to the balk**, since all runners (including the batter-runner) advanced one base on the pitch following the balk.

The following five points are to be observed when calling balks:

1. Either umpire may call any balk, although the plate umpire usually has a better look at a step balk in the Two-Umpire System.
2. The call of “That’s a balk!” is to be made **loudly and emphatically**.
3. When one umpire calls a balk, the other umpire should follow with the same call.
4. At the proper moment for calling time after a balk, both umpires shall call “Time!” **loudly and emphatically**.
5. Before the next pitch the plate umpire will give the correct count and put the ball back into play.

### **8.10 FOREIGN SUBSTANCE ON BALL OR PITCHER; DEFACEMENT OF THE BALL**

Official Baseball Rule 8.02(a)(2) through (a)(6) legislate against the **application of foreign substances** on the ball as well as **defacement of the ball** in any manner by the pitcher. Under these rules if the umpire detects the application of a foreign substance or defacement of the ball, the umpire shall immediately eject the pitcher from the game. In addition the pitcher shall be suspended automatically. In National Association leagues, the automatic suspension shall be for ten games.

Official Baseball Rule 8.02(b) provides that the pitcher shall not have “**on his person, or in his possession, any foreign substance**.” The penalty for this portion of the rule is immediate ejection from the game (no warning). In addition the pitcher shall be suspended automatically. In National Association leagues, the automatic suspension shall be for ten games.

The umpires have the responsibility of detecting the application of foreign substance or defacement of the ball both before and after the pitch. If the umpire detects or suspects that a foreign substance has been applied to the ball, or if the umpire detects or suspects that the ball has been defaced in any manner, the umpire should request the pitcher (or catcher) to give the umpire the ball. If, upon examination, the umpire is firmly convinced that the pitcher has applied a foreign substance such as grease, lubricant, tar, etc. or has expectorated on the ball or has defaced the ball in any manner, the umpire shall remove the pitcher from the game.

If, in the judgment of the umpire, it is warranted, the umpire should ask a player for any equipment the umpire wishes to inspect for a foreign substance. If a player refuses to give the equipment to the umpire on request, the player should be warned that such refusal will subject the player to ejection from the game, and if the player continues to refuse, the umpire should eject him. At no time should an umpire place hands on a player or use physical force to obtain the player’s equipment.

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In cases of possession of a foreign substance by the pitcher, the umpire shall retain the evidence and forward to the league office.

A manager's request to check a pitcher for a foreign substance does not obligate the umpire to do so.

If a pitcher is disqualified, the substitute pitcher should have time for a full warm-up similar to the time allowed when an injured pitcher is removed from the game. (See Section 8.2, "Restrictions on Pitchers Warming Up.")

**NOTE:** The pitcher may not attach anything to either hand, any finger, or either wrist (e.g., Band-Aid, tape, Super Glue, etc.) The umpire shall determine if such attachment is indeed a foreign substance for the purpose of Official Baseball Rule 8.02(b), but in no case may the pitcher be allowed to pitch with such attachment to his hand, finger or wrist.

The Casebook Comments to Official Baseball Rule 8.02(a)(2) through (6) provide that if the pitcher violates 8.02(a)(2) (expectorates on his hand, ball or glove) or 8.02(a)(3) (rubs the ball on his glove, person or clothing), and, in the judgment of the umpire, the pitcher did not intend to alter the characteristics of the baseball, then the umpire may, at his discretion, warn the pitcher in lieu of removing the pitcher from the game. If the pitcher persists in violating either 8.02(a)(2) or (3), the umpire shall then remove the pitcher from the game.

The penalty for violating Official Baseball Rule 8.02(a)(2) through (6) also provides that if a play follows a violation by the pitcher, the offensive manager may elect to take the results of the play (in addition to the pitcher's removal from the game). If the manager does not elect to accept the play following a violation of Official Baseball Rule 8.02(a)(2) through (6), then the pitcher shall be charged with a "Ball" if no runners are on base or, if there are runners on base, a "Balk."

## **8.11 PITCHER GOING TO MOUTH**

Under Official Baseball Rule 8.02(a)(1), the pitcher is charged with a "Ball" if he touches his mouth or lips while in contact with the pitcher's plate; or while in the 18-foot circle, he touches his mouth or lips and fails to wipe off before touching the ball or pitcher's plate. The rule indicates that the pitcher must clearly wipe the fingers of his pitching hand dry before touching the ball or pitcher's plate. The rule allows for the umpire, in cold weather, to announce to both teams that it is permissible for the pitcher to bring his hand in contact with his mouth in order to blow into it.

The pitcher, without contacting his mouth or lips, is allowed to blow onto his bare hand at any time provided he does not expectorate on his hand.

Should the pitcher go to his mouth while off the 18-foot circle, he should wipe off before contacting the ball, as to do so otherwise could violate Official Baseball Rule 8.02(a)(2).

If the pitcher goes to his mouth while on the dirt part of the mound and fails to wipe off before touching the ball or pitcher's plate; or if the pitcher goes to his mouth while in contact with the pitcher's plate, the umpire will indicate this infraction by calling, "That's a ball; you went to your mouth" while pointing at the pitcher. The umpire will then call "Time," and the plate umpire will turn around and announce to the pressbox, "Pitcher went to his mouth" (indicating this by a wiping motion of the hand in front of the mouth), and then give the new count. The plate umpire would then turn around and again give

the correct count while facing the infield (the count should be given visually and verbally).

### 8.12 TRIPS TO THE MOUND

A second trip to the mound to the same pitcher in the same inning by a manager or coach will cause that pitcher's removal **from the game**.

The manager or coach is prohibited from making a second visit to the mound while the same batter is at bat, but if a pinch hitter is substituted for this batter, the manager or coach may then make a second visit to the mound but must remove the pitcher.

*For the purpose of this rule, a batter's time at bat begins the moment the preceding batter is put out or becomes a runner.*

A trip to the mound begins when the manager or coach crosses the foul line. The trip ends when the manager or coach leaves the 18-foot circle surrounding the pitcher's rubber. When the manager or coach leaves the 18-foot circle, he must keep going and not return to the mound.

One of the effects of the rule regarding trips to the mound is as follows:

Once a manager or coach has made a trip to the mound, the pitcher then pitching must continue pitching to the batter then at bat (or retire the side) unless a pinch hitter is substituted or unless one of the following situations applies:

- a) If a game becomes suspended during a manager's or coach's trip to the mound (or after the trip but while the same batter is still at bat), a new pitcher may be substituted when the game is later resumed.
- b) If a rain delay occurs during a manager's or coach's trip to the mound (or after the trip but while the same batter is still at bat), a new pitcher may be substituted when the game is resumed following the rain delay.

If the catcher or any other player goes to the dugout and then immediately to the mound, it will be considered a visit to the mound by the manager.

If the manager or coach goes to the catcher or infielder and that player then goes to the mound (or the pitcher goes to the infielder at his position) before there is an intervening play (a pitch or other play), that will be the same as the manager or coach going to the mound.

If a pitcher is removed and the manager or coach remains to talk to the new pitcher, this is not charged as a visit with the new pitcher.

If the coach goes to the mound and removes a pitcher and then the manager goes to the mound to talk with the new pitcher, that will constitute one trip to that new pitcher that inning.

If a manager changes pitchers and leaves the mound, he (or a coach) **may** come out again to visit the pitcher **while the same batter is at bat**, but this will constitute one trip to that new pitcher that inning.

If the manager and pitcher are both ejected at the same time, a coach or acting manager may visit the mound to meet with the new pitcher prior to play resuming without a trip being charged - provided that the manager who has been ejected has not already

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conferred with and left the new pitcher.

For example, if the pitcher and manager are both ejected and a new pitcher takes the mound alone, a coach may come out of the dugout and go to the mound while the new pitcher is warming up without a trip being charged. On the other hand, if the ejected manager remains on the mound until the new pitcher arrives, a subsequent visit to the new pitcher by a member of the coaching staff prior to resumption of play constitutes a trip to the new pitcher.

If a manager or coach's conference with the pitcher takes place on the **grass** (i.e., off the dirt of the mound), this constitutes a trip. If a manager or coach confers with the pitcher on the grass (or the meeting "moves" from the dirt to the grass), the trip ends when the manager or coach "breaks" from the meeting. He must then keep going and not return to the pitcher.

Any attempt - in the umpire's judgment - to circumvent this rule shall be deemed a trip.

In a case where a manager has made his first trip to the mound and then attempts to return a second time to the mound in the same inning with the same batter at bat, he shall be **warned** by the umpire that he cannot return to the mound. If the manager ignores such warning, he shall be removed from the game and the pitcher required to pitch to the batter until he is retired or gets on base. After the batter is retired or becomes a base runner, then this pitcher must be removed from the game. The manager should be notified that his pitcher will be removed from the game after he pitches to one batter so he can have a substitute pitcher warmed up. In this case, the substitute pitcher will be allowed eight preparatory pitches or more if in the umpire's judgment circumstances justify.

**NOTE:** If through umpire error, the manager is inadvertently allowed to go to the mound a second time while the same batter is at bat (**without** the manager being **warned** that he cannot do so), the pitcher then pitching will be required to pitch to the batter then at bat until he is retired or gets on base. After the batter is retired or becomes a base runner, this pitcher must then be removed from the game. **However**, because the umpire failed to **warn** the manager that he was not allowed to make a second trip to the mound while the same batter was at bat, the manager is **NOT** to be ejected from the game in this situation.

The manager may request permission from the umpire to visit the mound in case of injury to or illness of the pitcher, and with permission granted it will not be counted as a visit to the mound. The plate umpire shall accompany the manager or coach in such situations and remain in the vicinity of the conference to ensure this regulation is not abused. The opposing manager is to be informed at the conclusion of the conference that this is not a visit. An athletic trainer does not have to accompany the manager to the mound for the umpire to "wave off" the trip.

In the case of a **player-manager**, in the judgment of the umpire any visit to the mound will constitute a trip. The umpire shall notify the player-manager and the opposing manager each time a trip is charged.

In the case of a **player-coach**, while playing, the coach will be treated as a player until he is considered to have abused the privilege. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the privilege is abused, the player-coach and his manager will be advised that any future visits to the mound will be charged as trips.

### **8.13 PITCHER NOT STOPPING IN SET POSITION WITHOUT RUNNERS ON BASE**

No penalty is specified for a pitcher who does not come to a complete stop when pitching from the set position with no runners on base. Not coming to a complete stop with no runners on base is not, in itself, an illegal pitch as defined in the Official Baseball Rules. However, if a pitcher delivers a quick pitch with no runners on base, the pitch shall be called a “Ball” (see Official Baseball Rule 8.01(d) and 8.05(e)). Under the Official Baseball Rules, a quick pitch is a pitch that is “delivered before the batter is reasonably set in the batter’s box” and/or a pitch “made with the obvious intent to catch a batter off balance.” The Official Baseball Rules further state, “The quick pitch is dangerous and should not be permitted.”

### **8.14 SIGNALING “NO TRIP”**

After an injury trip to the mound is concluded, the plate umpire shall inform the opposing manager that the conference was not considered a trip. He will do this by **verbally and visually** indicating to the manager, “No trip.”

### **8.15 PITCHER EJECTED**

If a pitcher is ejected during an inning in which he is pitching, the substitute pitcher should have time for a full warm-up, similar to the time allowed when an injured pitcher is removed from the game.

(See Section 8.2, “Restrictions on Pitchers Warming Up.”)



## SECTION 9

### MISCELLANEOUS CLARIFICATIONS, PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

#### 9.1 LEGAL CATCH

The following guidelines shall apply in ruling whether the ball was or was not caught:

1. If a fielder, after catching the ball, crashes into a stand and drops the ball, it is not a catch.
2. If one fielder collides with another and drops the ball, or if after he has caught the ball another fielder collides with him and the ball is dropped, it is not a catch.
3. If a fielder gets a hand or hands on the ball and falls down in the attempt, he must “come up” with the ball to be ruled a catch.

A ball will be ruled caught when the momentum of the catch is completed and the player voluntarily releases the ball.

These examples do not apply where a fielder has completed a legal catch, and then drops the ball while in the act of drawing back his arm to make a throw.

A fielder may not jump over any fence, railing or rope marking the limits of the playing field in order to catch the ball. A fielder may (1) reach over such fence, railing or rope to make a catch; (2) fall over the same after completing the catch; (3) jump on top of a railing or fence marking the boundary of the field to make a catch; or (4) climb onto a fence or on a field canvas and catch the ball. In all four cases the catch would be legal, as dictated by the best judgment of the umpire.

The same restrictions apply to a foul ball descending into a stand. A catcher or fielder may not jump into a stand to catch such a ball, but reaching into the stand and making the play is permitted.

**Play 1:** Bases loaded, one out. Fielder catches fly ball and momentum carries him into the stands. Fielder remains standing. Can the fielder throw for a play?

**Ruling 1:** No. “Time” is called and all runners advance one base.

As provided in Casebook Comment to Official Baseball Rule 6.05(a), no fielder may step into or go into a dugout to make a catch. However, if a fielder, after catching a fly ball on the playing surface, falls down in the dugout, or falls into a dugout, bench or grandstand at any point while in possession of the ball, the base runners shall be entitled to advance one base and the ball shall be dead.

(See Section 6.5, “Fielder Falling Into Dugout or Stands.”)

## **9.2 TAG**

Under Official Baseball Rule 2.00 - Tag, a tag is the action of a fielder in touching a base with his body while holding the ball securely and firmly in his hand or glove; or touching a runner with the ball, or with his hand or glove holding the ball, while holding the ball securely and firmly in his hand or glove.

It is not a tag, however, if simultaneously or immediately following his touching a base or touching a runner, the fielder drops the ball.

If the fielder has made a tag and drops the ball while in the act of making a throw following the tag, the tag shall be adjudged to have been made. In establishing the validity of the tag, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove that he has complete control of the ball.

## **9.3 FORCE PLAYS**

Under Official Baseball Rule 2.00 - Tag, a fielder has legally tagged a base for a force play when he touches a base with his body while holding the ball securely and firmly in **his hand or glove**.

**Play 1:** Ground ball to shortstop. The shortstop's throw to the first baseman bounces and is "trapped" against the first baseman's body by his arm. The first baseman holds the ball securely in this manner while the batter-runner touches first base. After the batter-runner has crossed the bag, the first baseman pulls the ball out with his hand and shows it to the umpire, claiming possession.

**Ruling 1:** Batter-runner is "Safe." The fielder must hold the ball securely and firmly in his hand or glove while touching the base with his body before the batter-runner touches first in order to **make an out**.

(See Section 6.10, "Ball Going Into Player's Uniform.")

## **9.4 FOUL TIPS**

Regarding the definition of a foul tip, the proper interpretation is that a foul tip must be caught by the **catcher** unassisted.

It is recommended that umpires indicate foul tips by signaling foul tip followed by a strike mechanic, particularly on check-swing foul tips and foul tips that are caught close to the ground.

## **9.5 INFIELD FLY**

On the Infield Fly Rule, the umpire is to rule whether the ball could ordinarily have been handled by an infielder - not by some arbitrary limitation such as the grass or the base lines. The umpire must rule also that a ball is an infield fly, even if handled by an outfielder, if, in the umpire's judgment the ball could have been as easily handled by an infielder. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare "Infield fly; Batter is out!" for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near the foul line, the umpire shall declare, "Infield fly, if fair." When one umpire calls an infield fly, other umpires are instructed to follow the call immediately so that any player on the field, with normal alertness, shall know that an infield fly has been called.

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The infield fly is not an appeal play; the umpire's judgment governs.

The ball is in play on an Infield Fly and, therefore, any other infractions that occur during the play are taken into consideration.

(See Section 7.8, "Infield Fly Hits Runner Not on Base.")

If on an Infield Fly the infielder intentionally drops the ball, the ball remains in play despite the provisions of Official Baseball Rule 6.05(l). The Infield Fly Rule takes precedence.

## **9.6 INFIELDER INTENTIONALLY DROPS FLY BALL OR LINE DRIVE**

Under Official Baseball Rule 6.05(l), the batter is out, the ball is dead, and runner(s) return to their original base(s) when an infielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball or line drive with runners on first, first and second, first and third, or bases loaded (with less than two out).

Note that the batter is not declared out in this situation if the infielder permits the ball to drop untouched to the ground except when the Infield Fly Rule applies.

When an infielder deliberately drops a fair ball or line drive to set up a double play situation, runners may safely return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch. The same application shall be made if an outfielder has come so close to the infield to set up a double play situation if he intentionally drops the ball.

Runners cannot advance under this rule. Umpires shall immediately call "Time" when, in their judgment, the ball is intentionally dropped.

## **9.7 INFIELDER INTENTIONALLY DROPPED**

If on an Infield Fly rule the infielder intentionally drops a fair ball, the ball remains in play despite the provisions of Official Baseball Rule 6.05(l). The Infield Fly rule takes precedence.

## **9.8 CHECKED SWINGS**

The Casebook Comments to Official Baseball Rule 9.02(c) provide that the manager or catcher may request the plate umpire to ask a partner for help on a half-swing when the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball. The rule further states that appeals on a half-swing may only be made on a call of ball and when asked to appeal. The plate umpire may - on his own volition - ask for help from the appropriate base umpire if in doubt on a checked swing.

The preferred mechanic for asking help on a check swing is for the plate umpire to point assertively with the **left arm** directly at the appropriate base umpire while asking if the batter swung. This mechanic helps avoid confusion between an appeal and a strike mechanic.

If the crew is working with three umpires, the plate umpire shall ask for help from the first base umpire with a right-handed batter at bat and shall ask for help from the third base umpire with a left-handed batter at bat, regardless of whether or not there are runners on base.

In situations when there are two strikes on the batter and the next pitch is a *passed ball or wild pitch (or other pitch which eludes the catcher)* on which there is a check swing, the proper procedure is for the plate umpire to ask the base umpire for help **IMMEDIATELY** (while the catcher is retrieving the ball), *without waiting for an appeal request from the defense*. This way, both the defense and offense are quickly advised as to what the final call will be.

Managers, coaches or players may not argue the call (or the appealed decision) on a checked swing. If a manager, coach or player **leaves his position** to argue with any umpire concerning the decision on a checked swing, he shall be **warned** that this is not permitted. If he persists in arguing, the offender shall be removed from the game, as he is now arguing over a called ball or strike.

All decisions on checked swings shall be called **loudly and clearly** by the plate umpire. If the pitch is a ball and the batter does not swing at the pitch, the mechanic to be used by the plate umpire is: "Ball; no, he didn't go." If the pitch is a ball but the batter commits on the check swing, the mechanic to be used is: "Yes, he went," while pointing directly at the batter and then coming up with the strike motion.

*The umpire's decision on a check swing shall be based entirely on his judgment as to whether or not the batter struck at the pitch.*

Base runners and umpires must be alert to the possibility that the base umpire - on a checked swing appeal from the plate umpire - may reverse the call of a ball to the call of a strike, in which event the runner is in jeopardy of being put out by the catcher's throw. Also, the catcher and umpire must be alert in base-stealing situations if a ball call is reversed to a strike by the base umpire upon appeal from the plate umpire. For example, consider the following plays:

**Play 1:** Runner on first base, 3-1 count on the batter. Runner is stealing, and there is a check swing on the pitch. Plate umpire calls, "Ball; no, he didn't go." Catcher throws the ball to second base anyway, resulting in a play at second where the runner is tagged before reaching second base.

**Ruling 1:** The base umpire should watch the play closely but make no call on the play because when the tag play occurs at second base it actually is "Ball Four" - and will continue to be - until an appeal is made, and even then it will remain ball four unless the check swing is reversed. Therefore, after the play at second base is completed the base umpire should merely announce, "That's ball four" in order to avoid any confusion on the part of the players. If the defensive manager or catcher requests an appeal on the check swing, the plate umpire will ask his partner for help. If the call is "No, he didn't go" then the original call of ball four prevails. However, if the call is "Yes, he went," the base umpire will emphatically call the appeal ("Yes, he went") and then the umpire at second will turn and very emphatically call the runner out or safe at second base, depending on what he observed when the play occurred at second.

**Play 2:** Runner on first base is stealing, three balls on the batter. The next pitch is a check swing that the plate umpire initially rules a ball. The batter-runner takes off for first base and in so doing interferes (out of the batter's box) with the catcher's throw to retire the runner attempting to reach second. Runner is safe at second. An appeal is made to the base umpire regarding the check swing, and the base umpire rules a swing.

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**Ruling 2:** Batter's interference. Batter is declared out and runner returns to first base. Note that if this situation occurred with two strikes on the batter, then both the batter and runner are declared out.

## **9.9 "VOLUNTARY STRIKE"**

In the situation where the third strike eludes the catcher on a half-swing and the batter-runner is entitled to run to first base, the appeal should be made to the base umpire instantly (without waiting for a request from the defense); but even if the appeal is not instant, the appropriate base umpire should **immediately and voluntarily** make a call of strike **IF** the base umpire is going to reverse the plate umpire's call. This will give the batter the immediate opportunity to run.

## **9.10 FOUL BALLS IN THE BATTER'S BOX**

Whenever either umpire sees a batted ball strike the batter while he is still in the batter's box, that umpire should immediately call and signal "Foul" loudly and clearly. If the base umpire observes the batted ball striking the batter after the batter has clearly left the batter's box and the base umpire is **absolutely certain** that without a doubt the ball struck the batter-runner completely out of the batter's box in fair territory, the base umpire will emphatically call "Time" and declare the batter-runner out. If the base umpire is not sure whether the batter-runner was out of the batter's box when struck by the ball, the base umpire shall hesitate momentarily to give the plate umpire an opportunity to make a call, and if the plate umpire makes no call, the base umpire should then immediately call "Foul" The base umpire would do the same thing if he is not sure whether the batter-runner was in fair or foul territory when leaving the batter's box and is struck by the ball.

If the base umpire has clearly seen the catcher trap the ball, he shall hesitate momentarily to give the plate umpire an opportunity to make a call, and if the plate umpire makes no call, the base umpire should then immediately call "Foul" and indicate that the catcher trapped the ball with an appropriate "Ball's on the ground" signal.

## **9.11 DROPPED THIRD STRIKES**

Crews shall address a procedure whereby assistance can be given by the base umpire on dropped third strikes and foul tips near the dirt. It is realized that the overall dynamic of the play could be ultimately affected by the possible change of a call, but all efforts should be made by the crew to sufficiently communicate and correctly call the play.

If the plate umpire signals the batter swung on a third strike, then a second mechanic by the plate umpire shall indicate that the batter has been declared out.

## **9.12 TWO RUNNERS IN CONTACT WITH BASE**

Under Official Baseball Rule 7.03, if two runners are touching a base at the same time, the following runner is out when tagged (unless, of course, the lead runner is forced). It is required that the umpire clearly indicate by pointing which runner has been declared out in such situations.

(See Official Baseball Rules 7.03(a) and 7.03(b).)

### **9.13 INTERPRETERS**

The following guidelines should be followed in regards to the use of interpreters by a club:

1. Any interpreter must be under contract to the Major League Club and assigned as a staff member to the Minor League Club.
2. Any interpreter may, if deemed necessary, remain on the bench during a game provided that he is dressed in appropriate Club attire (e.g. clothing similar to that normally worn by an athletic trainer or strength and conditioning coach). He should not be in uniform or in street clothes.
3. An interpreter may accompany a manager or pitching coach to the mound (again, provided he is dressed in appropriate Club attire).

### **9.14 POSITIONING FOR PLAYS AT THE PLATE**

The basic fundamental starting position for plays at the plate is as follows:

Take the play by starting at the **point of home plate**, then swing to the left (i.e., first base line extended) or right (i.e., third base line extended), depending on the direction of the throw to the plate and the anticipated closeness of the play. The plate umpire must be certain he is completely set for the play.

The position takes into consideration the fact that if the play at the plate is a **swipe tag**, the optimal position is generally the **third base line extended**; and if the play at the plate results in an actual **blocking of home plate**, the preferred position is the **first base line extended**. Swipe tags often occur when the play is going to be close and the runner will attempt to elude the tag; while blocking of the plate can occur on a ground ball to the infield or on a play where the throw has the runner beat by a large margin. Also, swipe tags can occur when the catcher must reach out and take the throw from the *right side*; while blocking of the plate often occurs when the throw is coming from the catcher's *left side*.

### **9.15 PROCEDURE FOR PITCHING CHANGES**

Base umpires are always to wait for the manager's signal for a new pitcher; they are not to go to the bullpen before the manager has called for the new pitcher. If there is more than one pitcher warming up in the bullpen, the umpire is to ascertain the correct pitcher requested. If the manager goes to the mound for a second trip during the same inning while the same pitcher is pitching and has not signaled before reaching the dirt of the mound, the plate umpire will at that point immediately go to the mound to ascertain the change.

When the base umpire goes to the bullpen, he will jog directly towards the bullpen and verbally and visually call for the new pitcher (Minor League umpires are **not** to wave their cap to indicate this). The umpire does not need to jog all the way to the bullpen; rather, he should jog until it is apparent that the pitcher has stopped warming up and is preparing to enter the playing field. At this point the base umpire should stop and wait momentarily to make sure the new pitcher is actually leaving the bullpen. Once the pitcher is on his way, the base umpire will jog to a position a few steps into the outfield grass, approximately between first and second, or between second and third (depending to which bullpen he has gone). During this time the plate umpire will have positioned

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himself on the opposite foul line of the defensive manager. This is done to avoid potential problems. Prior to the resumption of play, the plate umpire SHALL observe a few warm-up pitches from the new pitcher. The new pitcher is allowed exactly eight warm-up pitches (except in case of injury, illness, ejection or other sudden emergency).

In situations where the manager goes directly to the plate umpire with a pitching change (as in the case of a double-switch), the plate umpire should signal to the base umpire immediately regarding the new pitcher (left- or right-handed may need to be indicated to the base umpire) so that the pitching change can be expedited.

## **9.16 HANDS ON KNEES**

In all Minor League Baseball leagues, the base umpire is to assume a “ready” position with his hands on his knees prior to each pitch. (The concept here is to have the umpire ready and in a set position when the pitch is delivered.) When runners are on base, it is recommended that the umpire assume this position when the pitcher takes his sign from the catcher. With no runners on base, the umpire should be in the “ready” position as the pitcher is preparing to deliver the ball to the batter. Following the pitch, if the batter does not hit the ball, the base umpire should come up out of his hands on knees position. With a runner on first base only or third base only, the base umpire should take a step or two in the direction of the midpoint between the 45-foot line and first base or third base, respectively.

## **9.17 TOBACCO BAN POLICY**

Use of tobacco products is not permitted on the playing field for National Association umpires.

Effective June 15, 1993, Major League Baseball and the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues jointly instituted the following policy, which shall be strictly enforced and abided by all Minor League Baseball umpires.

**NOTE:** Major League players on a rehab assignment with a Minor League club are not subject to the provisions of this policy.

### **TOBACCO POLICY**

**For All Minor League Baseball Leagues, Extended Spring Training,  
Instructional League and the Arizona Fall League**

#### **A) BAN AT THE BALLPARK AND DURING TEAM TRAVEL:**

The use or possession of tobacco (including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco and smokeless tobacco) or any similar product (including, but not limited to, substitute products similar in appearance to tobacco) is prohibited, at all times, in all parts of the ballpark and during team travel. This includes, but is not limited to, the home and visitors’ clubhouse, umpires’ dressing room, bullpen, dugout, batting cages and the grandstands during pre-game and post-game workouts, games and all practices, and during all team travel, including bus, van, rail or air transportation.

#### **B) PERSONNEL COVERED BY THIS POLICY:**

All Managers, Coaches, Instructors, Athletic Trainers, Players, Scouts, Umpires,

Bat Boys/Girls, other Field and Clubhouse Personnel and all visiting Major League Administrative Personnel.

**C) RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENFORCEMENT OF POLICY:**

All violations of this policy are to be reported by the following personnel on the form provided by the Commissioner's Office:

***MANAGERS:***

Managers shall be held responsible for eliminating the use and possession of tobacco or any similar product by coaches, instructors, athletic trainers, players, bat boys/girls, and other field and clubhouse personnel at the ballpark and during all team travel, and for reporting such violations to the Commissioner's Office.

***UMPIRES:***

Umpires shall be held responsible for reporting/ejecting violators of this policy for violations that occur on the playing field, in the bullpens and dugouts. If an umpire fails to report/eject personnel who are in violation of the policy, a report shall be filed in the umpire's evaluation record.

***COMPLIANCE PERSONNEL:***

Compliance personnel representing the Commissioner's Office shall periodically check for violations in the ballpark, clubhouses and umpires' dressing room, during games and during team travel.

**D) ELIMINATION OF TOBACCO SUPPLY:**

All managers and athletic trainers shall dispose of all tobacco or similar products that are available or in storage in the clubhouse, dugout or bullpen and all club personnel shall dispose of their own personal supply within the ballpark. No tobacco or similar products shall be stored in these areas, including free samples provided by various companies, or brought into the ballpark by players or any other club personnel.

**E) DEFINITION OF A VIOLATION:**

Each incident in which a person is found to have been possessing and/or using tobacco or a substance similar in appearance as described above shall constitute a violation. If multiple persons are reported to be possessing and/or using tobacco or substances similar in appearance to tobacco, each such person shall be deemed to have committed a separate violation.

**F) PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS:**

The following penalties shall be imposed on the personnel shown below:

***MANAGERS:***

Managers shall be ejected for any on-field violations of the ban by himself, a player, coach, instructor or athletic trainer. In addition, a manager shall be fined by the Commissioner's Office according to the scale set forth below if he violates the ban, or knowingly permits violations by players, coaches, instructors or athletic trainers and fails to report same. A manager will be subjected to a monetary fine for each violation



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that occurs on his team, but will not be subjected to mandatory cessation counseling unless he personally was observed possessing and/or using tobacco or a substance similar in appearance.

***COACHES, INSTRUCTORS, ATHLETIC TRAINERS AND PLAYERS:***

***Violations on the field, including dugout and bullpen:***

All on-field violators including those in the dugout and bullpen shall be ejected from the game (including pre-game) immediately by the umpire. The manager shall be ejected at the same time if the violator is a coach, player, instructor or athletic trainer. No warning shall be given. In addition, the Commissioner's office shall fine violators according to the scale set forth below.

***Violations in the clubhouse or other parts of the ballpark, and during team travel:***

Violators in the clubhouse or other parts of the ballpark or during team travel shall be fined by the Commissioner's Office according to the scale set forth below. The manager is responsible for reporting any violations.

***Please note that only an umpire has the power to eject anyone from a game.***

***UMPIRES:***

Umpires in violation of the tobacco policy shall be fined by the Commissioner's Office according to the scale set forth below.

***BATBOYS/GIRLS; OTHER FIELD AND CLUBHOUSE PERSONNEL:***

If a batboy/girl or any other field or clubhouse personnel employed by the club violates the tobacco policy, he/she shall be instructed to leave the ballpark. A second violation shall result in dismissal from the club for the rest of the season.

**G) SCHEDULE OF FINES:**

For each violation of this policy which calls for a fine, the sanction shall be as follows:

First Violation - Monetary Fine Only (as outlined below and on the following page).

Subsequent Violations - Monetary Fine and Mandatory Cessation Counseling, with the number of counseling sessions to be determined by the counselor.

Single A, Short-Season A, Rookie, Extended Spring Training and Instructional League players and coaches - \$100;

Single A, Short-Season A, Rookie, Extended Spring Training and Instructional League managers - \$1,000;

Triple A, Double A and Arizona Fall League players and coaches - \$300;

Triple A, Double A and Arizona Fall League managers - \$1,000.

Managers shall be responsible for their own fines. A manager's fine for violations by players and/or staff (but not for his own use and/or possession) may be reduced a single time to \$500 if the manager has previously certified to the Commissioner's Office that he held a tobacco education meeting with his Club. For any subsequent violations by players and/or staff, the fine for the manager shall remain \$1,000 (total for any violations reported on a given date).

Fines for initial violations for all personnel covered by this policy may be waived if the violator agrees to undergo and completes a cessation counseling program approved by the Club's Employee Assistance Program Director. Completion of such program must be certified to the Commissioner's Office. If a violator's fine is waived, the corresponding fine for his manager shall also be waived. Fines for subsequent violations shall not be waived and the violator and his manager shall be subject of a monetary fine and mandatory counseling as described above.

Any unpaid fines may subject the violator and manager to salary garnishment at the discretion of the Commissioner's Office.

### **9.18 ON-FIELD BEHAVIOR POLICY**

The reports of on-field confrontations that are sent to the league president must be done with care and preciseness, and all umpires must be diligent and conscientious in their reporting.

The reports **MUST** be accurate and complete, and although difficult at times for umpires, the report is expected to contain everything that occurred during the confrontation.

Note that Major League players on a rehab assignment with a National Association club are subject to the provisions of this policy and are to be reported in the same manner as any player.

#### **ON-FIELD BEHAVIOR POLICY**

##### **For All Minor League Baseball Leagues, Extended Spring Training, Instructional League and the Arizona Fall League**

#### ***Pitchers Intentionally Throwing at Hitters:***

A pitcher judged by the plate umpire to have intentionally delivered a pitched ball at a batter will be ejected from the game per Official Baseball Rule 8.02(d)(1). An umpire shall have the discretion, in accordance with Official Baseball Rule 8.02(d)(2), to warn a pitcher whom he feels may have intentionally thrown at a batter. If such a warning is given to the pitcher, the manager of both teams shall be warned as well. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an umpire shall not be required to issue a warning prior to ejecting a player.

At the time of the ejection the umpire shall warn the manager of both teams that such another pitch by any pitcher during the game will result in the immediate expulsion of the pitcher and the pitcher's manager.

#### ***Field Personnel Leaving Their Position to Participate in Confrontations:***

For purposes of this policy, applicable field personnel shall be defined as players/coaches/athletic trainers/roving instructors.

The position of applicable field personnel is considered to be wherever the individual is located (dugout, bullpen, coaching box, defensive position, etc.) at the time a confrontation situation develops.

A player or players deemed by the league president to have been an instigator or combatant in a confrontation will receive an automatic fine (**minimum** \$450 at Triple

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A, \$300 at Class Double A, \$150 at Class A, \$75 at Short-Season and Rookie) and a **minimum** of a three-game suspension. Such violations will include but not limited to: a pitcher judged by the league president to have intentionally delivered a pitched ball at a batter, a pitcher leaving the pitcher's mound and initiating a confrontation, a batter/runner charging or pursuing the pitcher, fighting, etc.

A player involved in a confrontation while remaining at his position and judged to have been defending himself and not contributing to the incident will not be ejected, fined or suspended.

All applicable personnel leaving their position to in any way involve themselves in a confrontation other than an instigator or combatant will be fined by the league president based on the degree of their involvement.\* Minimum fines for leaving their positions will be \$150 at Triple A, \$100 at Class Double A, \$50 at Class A, \$25 at Short-Season and Rookie. The violator's conduct will be the basis for the league president's decision on whether a penalty greater than the minimum is appropriate.

If a violation of this policy does occur and a confrontation develops, the field manager/coaches/roving instructors are expected to leave their positions as necessary, in an attempt to bring the violator(s) from their team under control. Staff should not involve themselves in physically restraining personnel from an opposing team.

Any player not currently on the active list (disabled or otherwise) leaving his position to become involved in a confrontation will be subject to the same penalties as an active player. Any suspension involving an inactive player will be served immediately upon activation.

*\* Should a skirmish develop while other players are located nearby (i.e., a rundown, a play at second base involving the runner and the shortstop or second baseman with the other nearby, or a play at the plate involving the runner and the catcher with the pitcher "backing up") the player must not become involved as this will constitute a violation for leaving their position at the time a confrontational situation develops.*

#### **NOTES:**

a) At no time will more than two position players and one pitcher concurrently serve suspension. The length of suspension will vary based on his position as a starting or relief pitcher. The league president will determine when suspensions will be served. All suspensions under this policy are to be without pay.

b) In the case of Instructional League and Extended Spring Training all fines and suspensions shall be handled the same as the Rookie level and shall be determined by the Commissioner's Office.

c) In the case of the Arizona Fall League all fines and suspensions shall be handled the same as Triple A and shall be determined by the Commissioner's Office.

### **9.19 POLICY ON OPEN WOUNDS DURING GAME**

In accordance with a directive from the Commissioner's Office dated March 17, 1993, all Minor League umpires shall abide by the Major League policy regarding incidents in which a player begins bleeding during a game.

As the policy states, "It is important for all umpires to know that some precautions

will be taken that may cause brief delays in a game. For example, if a garment(s) is penetrated by blood or other potentially infectious materials, the garment(s) shall be removed immediately or as soon as feasible.”

Umpires are instructed to use good common sense in applying this directive. Excessive delays are not expected, but, in extreme cases the situation should be dealt with immediately. In most cases it is expected that the problem can be resolved between innings; however, there may be cases when the situation must be acted upon immediately.

## **9.20 FLY BALL STRIKING TOP OF OUTFIELD WALL**

Unless provided otherwise by local ground rule, a fair fly ball striking the top of the outfield wall and bounding back onto the playing field shall be treated the same as a fair fly ball that strikes the outfield wall and rebounds back onto the playing field (in play but may not be caught for the purposes of an out).

Unless provided otherwise by local ground rule, a fair fly ball striking the top of the outfield wall and bounding over the wall shall be ruled a homerun.

Unless provided otherwise by a local ground rule, a fair fly ball striking the top of the outfield wall and remaining on the top of the wall shall be deemed a ground rule double.